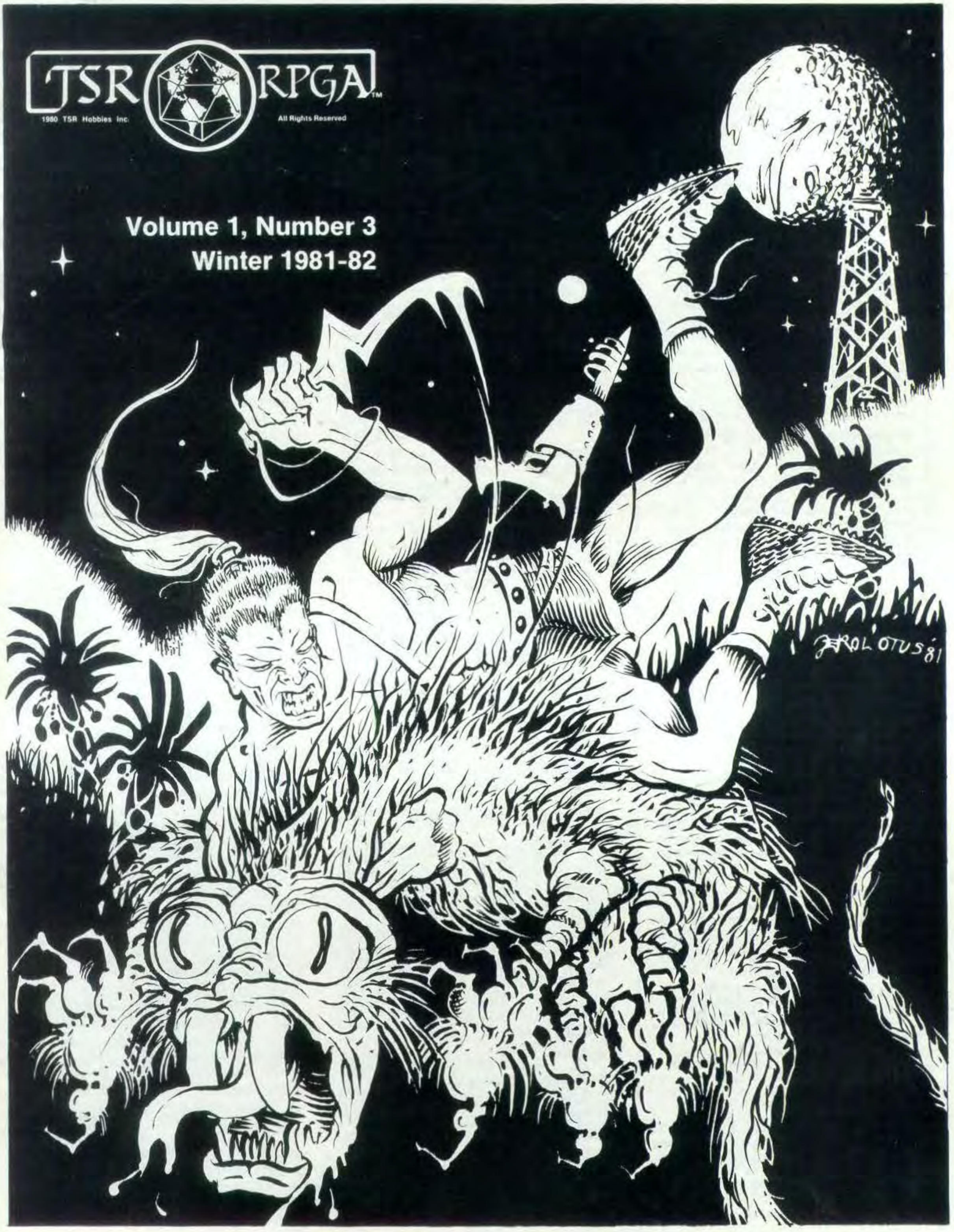
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JEROL OTUS 81

Hello again...

Thick, huh? We had so much to say that we made this one twice normal size. All meat, too, so to speak; no advertising this time.

Watch for some changes in the next issue; we'll be back to normal 16-page size, but with some new twists. And we're getting lots of good art; at least, I think so. How about you? And are we telling you what you want to know? Communicate!

Frank Mentzer

RPGA NEWS

Volume I, Number 3

Winter 1981-82

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OFFICIAL NOTICE

Thanks to a donation from an anonymous RPGA member, we are proud to announce the creation of the:

RPGA SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Fund will give out scholarships to RPGA Members who are entering college. It is administered by the TSR Foundation, a non-profit corporation registered in the state of Wisconsin.

The Fund will award one Scholarship of $1000.00 to the eligible applicant with the highest College Entrance Examination Board scores or equivalent thereof. Additional scholarships may be awarded should the amount in the Fund at that time permit doing so in the judgement of the administrators.

The 1982 scholarship award will be paid to the account of the recipient at the college or university attended by him or her during the second quarter or trimester of the 1982-83 school year.

Anyone may donate money to the Scholarship Fund, and all donations are fully deductible for Income Tax purposes. (So tell your parents!)

The following requirements must be met before an applicant can be considered for an award:

YOU MUST:

1. Be a member in good standing of the Role Playing Game Association.
2. Fill out an RPGA Scholarship Fund Application, available free from RPGA HQ, POB 509, Lake Geneva, WI 53147
3. Be attending an accredited High School.
4. Be accepted by an accredited college or university.

YOU MAY NOT:

1. Be an employee of TSR Hobbies, Inc.,or a member of the immediate family of such an employee.
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Write today for an application. And tell your friends!

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WHITE RABBITS

"Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!"

"Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!"

— Lewis Carroll

It's much like that around here. We planned to crank out the modules lickety-split, but they're running late due to production difficulties; add a month *(scream) (sorry!)* to each of the dates given in the last newsletter: R1 on February 1, R2 on March 1, etc. We're trying, but with increasing the newsletter size and frequency and trying to publish 10 modules this year (yes, you read that right) with a staff of 3-4 people, well, things are getting crazy. We'll probably add a production supervisor soon.

This newsletter is running MUCH later than we'd hoped; again, sorry. But we won't let it out until we're satisfied with the content and quality; you'll appreciate it in the long run. And we should be caught up by the middle of 1982, and can hopefully drop this "things that are late" column by then.

One thing — if you folks would send in more material we could run, the newsletter wouldn't be quite so late. We're looking for good articles, cartoons, comments, and so forth; but be sure to write for a legal submission form first, otherwise we aren't allowed to even *look* at a manuscript or piece of art.

Hang in there; we're picking up speed. We are trying to work twice as fast as we can....

NOTES FROM HQ

Part I

That Khris is some wizard, I'll tell ya.

We set up all these rooms, see, an' got Grrnch ta enchant 'em special for visitors. We can't go in 'em, see, 'cause that'd start the show, an' ya *don't* wanna get caught in the show, that's for sure.

So one of 'em's got these metal apples wit round hangers, an' funny metal an' wood clubs that have holes in the ends, an' some gadgets that I dunno what they do. The next room glows blue, an' there's a *thing* in there that's got lotsa arms an' stuff. There's more, but I forget.

We set up all kindsa special arrow an' dagger an' spear traps, an' Harry — y'know Harry, Ethel's kid, about eight-six, skinny? The little guy? Well Harry got ahold of this magic rock, see, back when that crazy drood came aroun' ta complain about his aminals. Remember what we did ta him?

Yeah. Well anyway, Harry got the rock ta make this rock creature an' had it dig a bunch of pits an' stuff. So we had everything all set up, but the bad part was, nothin' ever wandered in an' started it up. Y'know, it was a real shame about Harry, but ya never can tell about that magic stuff.

So Grrnch got this idea, see, an' we put up some signs an' made some fake trails, an' sure enough here comes this bunch o' hewmans an' elfs lookin' for trouble, an' boy do they find it! An' before they even get in. They were really good — oh yeah, I forgot, you think they're stringy. Well, whatever ya want....

So things went really good for a while, an' things went sorta good even inta the cold times. We were gettin' ready ta pack it in for a few months, y'know, an' then this bunch showed up an' started plowing through the rooms. We really had ta work ta get ridda them, an' I figger they'll be back later when the dragon moves outta the outer caves.

So anyway, as I was sayin' — ya want some more o' this stew? No? Well anyway, we were kinda rushed, an' we forgot about the traps.

You guys have Khris come around in the cold time? OK, so ya know about it... what's he usually bring?

Yeah, we always get new pots too. So anyway, we sacked out. An' I dunno how long it was, but all of a sudden I wake up, an' I *know* it ain't right 'cause it's too cold, an' there's this noise. I musta been on a rock, or somethin', but here I'm up an' everybody else's zonko, I mean really out. So I get up an' go over ta the door, an' open the slot an' look out.

Boy, talk about timin'. There's this fat guy, see, an' he's cussin' a blue streak an' covered with leeches from the pool an' *jumpin'*, I mean, he was really movin'. An' those leeches are just fallin' off, like he was magic. Maybe he was. Anyway, he's only in room two, see, an' there's three more.... So he looks around, an' I ducked so's he doesn't see me, an' when I looked again he's headed for the door. So I go over an' check that door.

He looks in an' waves an' says somethin', y'know, like Grrnch does, an' anyway the whole room goes bananas. I mean the traps open, an' everything goes off at once. He just watches, an' laughs kinda soft, an' just walks through.

So with this goin' on I just hafta keep watchin', y'know, so I go ta the next door. He does the same kinda stuff, but ya can see he's gettin' kinda fed up, 'cause he does his bit *before* he even sees what's there! How ya like that? An' on he goes, an' he'll be all the way in soon, I can tell, but everybody's sleepin' like nothin' an' won't wake up. So I hid behind this very table, right here.

I don't hear nothin' for maybe five, six minutes, so I decide ta chance it an' take a peek. An' he's got this little bag, see, an' he's pullin' out these big pots, see, so right away I know it's gotta be Khris, 'cause he's the only one that makes the big ones. An' I keep watchin', 'cause *nobody* I know has ever really seen him, I mean I always thought it might be gnomes or somethin'.

An' pretty soon he's got all the pots out o' the bag, an' he takes out a bunch more stuff an' I mean there's *no way* that alla that junk can fit in that lil' bag, but there it all is. Magic bag, prob'ly. An' he's reachin' in, an' pulls out this wan' — y'know, one o' them magic sticks — so he pulls out this wan', an' throws all the other stuff back in, an' puts the bag away, an' starts ta head out. I kept runnin' door ta door ta see if anything'd get him, but no way for this guy, I mean really. An' out he goes, an' *still* I can't get nobody ta wake up, but I figger I'm lucky today an' run out after him ta see where he goes.

Well, he wasn't there, like he'd never been. There's this white cold stuff all over, an' I *HATE* it on m' feet — I forgot ta put my clompers on — but I keep runnin' an' suddenly there's this noise, an' I figger it's probably the dragon an' I'VE HAD IT but no, it's up above the cave entrance, that flat spot up there.

There's Khris, an' he's *for sure* a magic type 'cause he's sittin' on this big gadget wavin' his arms an' I hit the deck. I mean, flat; who knows what's comin'? But he's not aimin' at me, see, he's not even lookin' this way. Boy, that white junk is TERRIBLE when ya flop right down in it; don' ever do that.

An' I look up again, an' he's conjured up a bunch o' these herd animals, see, an' I figger good-bye Charlie 'cause they're gonna come down an' stomp me. So I break for the cave, an' pull up short 'cause they're not comin'! They, an' he, an' the gadget, they're all goin' up in the air, an I *know* this is gonna make the dragon really burnt 'cause this is his "Airspace."

I dunno, that's what he says, I dunno what he means.

So off goes this guy, makin' a pass over the area just like the dragon does, an' I figger this is it, he's gonna waste the whole place... but he just flies off. Don't do nothin'. Just leaves.

I tell ya, I dunno. I'll bet nothin' acts normal in the cold time, that must be it; he sure didn't act like nothin' *I've* seen before.

Huh? Oh yeah, he did holler somethin' before he took off, but it was in hewman language, an' I dunno what most o' that means but it's funny, now't ya remind me, I think he said —

"Happy Christmas ta all, an' ta all a Good Night!"

Want some more stew?

WHERE I'M COMING FROM

by Frank Mentzer

This is my podium, to speak as I wish to those of you who will listen. I believe that —

People are the most interesting phenomenon on this earth, due to the infinite variety provided by the human mind;

Most people will regularly meet and interact with other people for their entire lives;

Meeting new people is easier and faster when those involved share a common interest;

Entertainment that requires participation is more beneficial to people than a passive form, as it encourages activity and discourages stagnation;

A game gives the best value for the money when compared to the cost of any other form of entertainment;

Organized gaming — that is, game groups, clubs, tournaments, and conventions — is one of the best ways to meet new people, as it provides a setting for the sharing of common interests;

A role playing game is one of the best of all types of games as it actually benefits the players, teaching them to succeed by thinking and cooperating;

The RPGA Network has the most potential for bringing organized gaming to the most individuals, as it is the largest and stablest organization in existence that concerns itself with an entire field of gaming, as opposed a limited focus on just one or two games;

The RPGA Network, therefore, can become the biggest and best medium for inexpensive entertainment, whether on a local, regional, national, or international scale, if its members and staff desire it and work to that end.

We're doing our part. Are you? Communicate; participate; enjoy.

Next issue we welcome the arrival of NOR, a world of fantasy and science fiction drawn by Roger Raupp. I hope you'll like it as much as I do. On the other hand, Tom Wham's been swamped with work, and won't be able to continue ROCKSNOZ on a regular basis; but I do look forward to seeing occasional notes from his infamous Land of Nidd whenever he sends them in. Not a regular, but a welcome visitor any time.

I looked through the mail of the recent months to see if there was some constructive criticism of the newsletter, but I couldn't find any. Bringing this up is probably just asking for trouble, but raves have been received from around the globe. I'm very flattered by the response; a frequent comment runs like, "This is a newsletter? This is a short MAGAZINE!" and that's an image I've tried to achieve. And it's growing, in size and frequency.

The response to the newsletter has been so great that we're going from quarterly to bi-monthly. This means that you'll get 6 newsletters in 1982, not just 4 (50% more!) and for no extra cost. They should go into the mail around the end of every other month, so you'll get them in early March, early May, and so forth. We might even get caught up by the end of the year.

My deepest thanks to the members who have responded so well and so often to our requests for names, suggestions, and so forth — not to mention the flood of orders for my modules. It's truly appreciated.

See you at the conventions!

LETTERS

Letters to the editor may be sent to "RPGA News, POB 509, Lake Geneva, WI 53147." We've been flooded with correspondence; keep it up!

"I most definitely enjoyed your first issue of the RPGA Newsletter, and having just received the second I am even more satisfied with its outlook and potential.

"I offer the suggestion of having an official column on new spells. The Illusionist class definitely needs more filling out in this regard, and the printing of new spells which are definitely researchable, or at least potentially available, within the AD&D system would be useful to players and game masters alike."

— BEB,Massachusetts

It is indeed hard for a DM to look at a new idea from a player and estimate its effects on a campaign. A sense of balance is required which only the most experienced game masters have developed. And we agree that the Illusionist class is somewhat underdeveloped and often inaccurately detailed. But remember that this class is a pure AD&D development, without roots in the Original D&D game or elsewhere (first appearing in an early DRAGON magazine), so it's not surprising that it's got a few bugs in it yet.

What do you think, readers? In the limited amount of space available within these pages, do YOU want to devote some space to things not in the books, such as discussions of the merit and effects of new spells? We could, if you want it.

"I have the following suggestions which I would like you to consider. They are: 1) a bulletin board of readers' ideas to respond to; 2) variants, to be edited and criticized; 3) one-page mini-adventures; 4) an AD&D Dungeon Master competency rating system. Also 5) I would like more information on how to become a dungeon master in an RPGA or AD&D Open Tournament."

— DK, Pennsylvania

Point by point: 1) could be good, if enough people respond in ways that would be interesting to most of the readers; 2) hmmm; well, I guess knowing what's recommended and what's not, with respect to modifications and variants, would help most people see how to modify, from an experienced viewpoint, so maybe; 3) coming soon in a newsletter this year, I hope; and 4) a real toughie, almost impossible to create fairly. Finally, 5) write to us and tell us that you want to be a Tournament Game Master, naming the game and the tournament(s) you want to get involved in, and which convention, too. We'll send you a questionnaire to fill out and return, and you'll hear from us before tournament time if we need you — and we do need lots of good game masters.

"Could you give me some info on painting figures, like methods, paints, brushes, etc.? I would really appreciate it. Thanks a bunch!" — TK, Ohio

Sure. But lots of painting articles have been and are being run in various magazines; for a change, we're running a series of articles reprinted from the D&D PA Newsletter, starting this month. The British viewpoint is often different, and always interesting.

"I wrote you guys 3 months ago asking for information about RPGA Memberships. Where is it?" — CB, Arkansas

On its way, probably. Frankly, if we responded to each request for information with a nice letter in first-class mail, we'd have to raise the price of memberships to cover the added postage, not to mention the extra people needed on this end. To save YOUR money, we let the requests pile up for a month or so, and send out "mass mailings" — the same pre-printed information to everybody, and using a special post office deal called "Bulk Rate." It works, but it's a little slow. Sorry, but that's the way things have to be sometimes.

DISPEL CONFUSION

by The Game Wizards

These are all official answers, as usual, except for the first one, about caltrops. You can use the details given there, but the procedure may be modified by TSR at a later date.

Q: What is a caltrop, and how do you handle them? Don't tell me they don't exist in the AD&D system; I've seen them in the DMG (pg. 216, Appendix G: Traps).
A: A caltrop behaves like a four-sided die, as it always lands with one point up, but it looks like a big four-pointed jack. Ever play jacks?

Caltrops were used effectively as an anti-cavalry defense in the middle ages. Each point is sharpened, causing 1 point of damage when stepped on. Many are needed to be effective — about 1 per 2-3 square feet (so you need 35-50 of them to cover one 10' square area), and should cost about 1gp each or less. Creatures stepping on them will act according to their intelligence; movement is slowed to normal at best, instead of charging. Be advised: TSR may be explaining caltrops officially, with all the other weapons used in fantasy combat, in a forthcoming work. *(You heard it here first, folks!)*

Q: I was visiting a friend and got into one of his AD&D games. We met a group of three gargoyles at an intersection, but we weren't allowed to swing at them until they took over 40 swings at us! The DM said we were surprised. I've never been *that* surprised. Is this a variant?
A: No, but it sounds like you were *badly* surprised. If you check the DMG (pg. 62, column 1), you'll find that each surprise segment is treated as a whole round for attacks, and 12 attacks per segment is the rule in this case (3 gargoyles times 4 attacks each). If you rolled a 1 and the DM a 6, they would have had 5 surprise segments and could have gotten in a total of 60 attacks — assuming that they didn't have to spend any segments moving in.

Players, don't despair; you can take measures to prevent surprise, such as describing who's looking where and when, having a ranger or monk along, and so forth. The DM should adjust surprise rolls according to terrain and specific actions, so you can avoid being surprised most of the time. But it *can* get nasty with bad rolls, and you can't be super-alert *all* the time.

Q: Since Good characters usually don't attack other Good characters, will Evil characters usually not attack other Evils?
A: A bit of clarification: Law/Chaos describes behavior, while Good/Evil has to do with motivation. A Good character usually doesn't hurt others unless necessary; an Evil one often does. Lawful Evils usually don't attack each other (unless a power struggle is going on, or something along that line), but who can tell what a Chaotic will do?

Q: Can a human bard switch to another class?
A: No. A human fighter who wants to branch out may become a dual-class character as described in the rules (PHB, pg.33), OR a bard — effectively a triple-class character — by following the progression described in PHB, Appendix II. When the fighter becomes a thief, the procedure is the same as if he were just becoming a dual-class fighter thief. However, he has the final option of continuing by entering a bard college after enough experience as a thief; if he flunks the exams (or whatever), he's stuck as a thief who used to be a fighter. Entering college is the ONLY way he can add another class (Bard), and upon doing so, he's fully committed.

This type of logic generates another problem: how can a half-elf potential bard become "dual class" in the first place? Well, it works, so, looking at it this way, potential bards are the only exception to the dual-class rules. But the half-elf MUST continue all the way once this has begun.

While we're on the subject, have you ever thought of developing Bard Colleges with parallels to our real ones? Classes, fraternities (and frat parties), mascots, sports, the library, the absent-minded professor, the campus itself . . . why, there are whole scenarios here, just waiting to be written.

Q: During melee, should psionic combat be resolved before physical attacks, or during it? If during, how do you tell when the weapons hit?
A: Psionics are not deadly nor overly complicated, but the DM must watch melee a little closer than normal. Characters can get a maximum of 10 psi attacks per round, 1 per segment; but "the creatures involved can engage in no other activity" (PHB, pg. 116). Interruptions during psi combat prevent psi attacks, but defenses are allowed. A demon, for example, could keep up a psionic defense while engaging in hand-to-hand combat, but could not perform any of its "At Will" spell-like abilities while doing so; it must drop its psionic defenses to use its special abilities.

Weapon speed factors, modified by the initiative rolls, determine the exact point in the round at which the attack occurs, and casting times determine spell effects in the same way. It is possible for a creature to psionically attack and defend at the beginning of a round, and then switch to psionic defense while attacking physically in that same round — with a delay (loss of initiative) equal to the number of segments spent psionically attacking.

Q: Does level draining by undead apply to psionic levels of mastery?
A: Yes, indeed; level drain applies to *all* benefits gained by levels of experience, which is the basis for determing levels of mastery of psionic disciplines.

RPGA INTERVIEW with...

JIM WARD

I first met James Michael Ward in West Virginia. He was to be a guest at a game convention there in 1980. I had arrived separately and had gotten settled in my room; wandering about WVU in Morgantown, looking at the odd collection of students and gamers about, I noticed a large gentleman with an odd gleam in his eye. There was something, some aura but I continued on, sure that I'd see this person again over the weekend; he looked like a gamer. I had returned to my room for no longer than 5 minutes when the TSR contingent arrived, led by this very character: Jim Ward himself.

THE Jim Ward? Creator of the Metamorphosis Alpha and GAMMA WORLD games, author of numerous articles and co-author of the original Gods, Demigod & Heroes book? "Gee; I wonder what he's like," I thought . . . .

On a scale of 1 to 10, Jim Ward qualifies for a 10 in both Chaos and Goodness. He may claim that the Chaos is exaggerated, but in an AD&D game at my place during which he tried a Lawful character, he was wringing wet with the effort by the end of the night. But goodness — well, Jim got up unexpectedly at an early hour to DM for us at the GEN CON® East game convention in July, and hardly complained at all.

Jim's ideas are renowned among the TSR fold. His ideas often result in first-class products. How does he do it? Where do all these great ideas come from? Just him, apparently; supplemented by a large fiction library and a history of gaming, his mind produces some of the most outrageous and entertaining concepts in the industry.

Jim is a good friend of the RPGA network. He has written columns for us, has attended members' meetings and other RPGA events, and most important of all, has broadened our visions by sharing his many ideas, mostly through his games and articles.

Jim currently lives near TSR's home in Lake Geneva, WI, a few miles to the north. He writes, argues, plays games, travels a bit in the line of duty, and generally loves to entertain others with his games and concepts. He's one of my favorite people; I think you'll like him too. So without further ado, we proudly present this continuation of the RPGA interview series with this issue's guest, Jim Ward:

RPGA: Just out of curiosity: how old are you?
JW: Thirty years old. Not to be trusted any more.
RPGA: Not at all; getting to be one of the Old People. When was your first experience with fantasy and science fiction; do you remember?
JW: Tom Swifts. In fifth grade, yes. We'd gone to the state of Washington; because of the Cuban missile crisis ['62], the Wisconsin National Guard was transferred there. And I was quite lonely; all my friends were in Wisconsin, and I wasn't able to attend school at that time. So my mom sent me to the Army PX, to buy whatever I wanted to buy, and there were some Tom Swift books there, and I picked them up, and that started it all off. In fact, I still like to read Tom Swift books; they're quite interesting.
RPGA: Have you accumulated a library?
JW: Oh my goodness, I have a marvelous library of books. I have probably about 3,000 titles now.
RPGA: Very nice. Do you tend more towards fantasy or science fiction?
JW: I think right now I'm kind of on the middle of the fence; I buy about as many fantasy as science fiction. I have several favorite authors . . . .
RPGA: Such as?
JW: I like Roger Zelazny; he's probably my favorite author of all time. He writes a lot of great books that are both science fiction and fantasy. And I like Robert Heinlein; I have all of his works, and I think he's very good. Let's see; Philip Jose Farmer, Jack Vance, all the old ones. I don't particularly like Asimov; Arthur C. Clarke I've kind of grown out of. Andre Norton, she writes a couple of good things every once in a while, but I didn't like Quag Keep, the D&D book; didn't like that at all. Otherwise, I think there are lots of good writers out there, and I try to sample them all.

RPGA: I personally have seen you come up with dozens of outstanding ideas, just spurting them forth. Where do you get your ideas? Do you know how you think these things up? What other influences besides your reading have contributed towards the way you've turned out?
JW: Well, I've seen a lot of good science fiction and fantasy movies. I think one that sticks in my mind is "Forbidden Planet," that great classic with Robbie the Robot and the Monster of The Id; that movie was really great. The first [TV] Star Trek was FINE; the second was kind of sad. "Star Wars"...I get ideas from those things.

Every once in a while, I'm quite sure that a subconscious thing comes rising to the surface. But it's books, and movies, and television — Star Trek, on TV of course, was grand. I think that Outer Limits, a much berated show, came too early. If it had come now, I think it would have had a much better chance. Twilight Zone was always good for thrilling scares every once in a while. But we watched a lot of TV as kids, and many good shows.
RPGA: Do you get any ideas from other persons —your wife, or kids?
JW: I suppose not; no, not really. Every once in a while I get to talking with the people at TSR. They're kind of like a widely divergent cross section of the universe, heavy on the strange and bizarre. And there's some very intelligent people there. You yourself have given me some good ideas every once in a while, that I've stolen and never given you credit for.
RPGA: That's the way it goes. As I understand it, you used to be on your own, doing various things, and now you work for TSR Hobbies, Inc. How did this come about?
JW: I told Gary long ago, when he was still working in his basement, that as soon as he could pay me what I was earning in my other job, I'd come to work at TSR. And he finally decided he could.
RPGA: How long ago was this?

JW: '74; yeah, real early, when he was just starting with his first thousand.
RPGA: So you go back a long ways; to before then?
JW: No, '74 is when I met him.
RPGA: How did that occur?
JW: We were in the Lake Geneva News Agency, and I was buying fantasy books, and going down the row, and there was a man right beside me that was also buying the exact same books I was purchasing! So when we got to the end of the row, we both had a handful of books —and they were the same thing!

So we sort of started talking about fantasy in general, and our liking of Conan and all those stories, and he said that he had a game where there was a fellow being chased by Set! And my ears perked up *instantly,* and we started talking about the *D&D game.* He invited me over to his house that weekend, and a couple of weekends later I finally got there, and Brian Blume taught me how to roll up my first character, which is still lives in the fantasy realm of Greyhawk. And it started from there!
RPGA: Interesting. Did you live in this area?
JW: I lived in Elkhorn. I've lived there most of my life. "God's Country," y'know.
RPGA: Yes, we know. What were you doing before you met Gary?
JW: Before I met Gary, I was...let's see; I had graduated from college in '73, and I was working for an industrial maintenance company, cleaning most of the buildings in Walworth County. *(chuckles)*
RPGA: What did you do from when you met Gary in '74 until he finally hired you?
JW: Before I started with TSR in June of 1980, I taught for five years at a small rural high school — freshmen through seniors.
RPGA: Did you play regularly in Gary's D&D games, then, from '74 on?
JW: In '74 and '75 I played regularly in the game, and then I went away to teach.
RPGA: Your name has come up in many products we've seen from TSR over the years, starting with the Metamorphosis Alpha game. Then came the Gods, Demigods & Heroes book, the GAMMA WORLD game, a GW module, then the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ book, and various other things. How did you *start* writing things that TSR decided they liked and started publishing?
JW: Well, I've always liked Science Fiction. I told Gary that we should have a science fiction version of the D&D game. And he said, "Well, okay, go ahead, *write it!*" So I handed him a 40 page manuscript that was gonna become Metamorphosis Alpha, and he says, "Well, this is good, but I need twice as much copy." So I handed him, later on, an 80 page manuscript and he says "Well, this is good, but I need twice as much copy." So I wound up doing it FIVE TIMES before he finally said, "Well, this is pretty nice." And that became Metamorphosis Alpha.
RPGA: What's the basis of "MA," as it's called?
JW: Well I read a book about a colonization ship that had gone bad and the race of people that lived in there. And so I figured that we could do the very same thing: a colonization ship goes out, runs into a weird cloud of radiation, and the action begins from there.
RPGA: So there are mutants, and the other things that we find in the GAMMA WORLD game, but in a confined setting?
JW: Exactly right. I'd imagine it as the same thing as a dungeon in a D&D game, but in a science fiction story.
RPGA: In a very large form. It's a recurrent theme; it **is** a favorite topic among many authors; no wonder it was chosen as a game. But why create the GAMMA WORLD game, then?
JW: Well, it's a natural tie, to go from the spaceship "dungeon" to the wilderness "world" *(laughs).* So what we did was, we just began formulating the wilderness section of a science fiction D&D game. And that became the GAMMA WORLD game.
RPGA: How are the Metamorphosis Alpha and GAMMA WORLD games similar, and how are they both like the D&D game?
JW: In Metamorphosis Alpha, there are mutations, and there is technology that gets used by the players. And they're direct correlations to the GAMMA WORLD game, also with mutations and technology. The creatures aren't really the same, but the idea of survival — not to go up in *levels* and gain power, but to gain power through acquisition of knowledge and material goods — is the concept in both the Metamorphosis Alpha and GAMMA WORLD systems. Their tie to the D&D system is the Armor Class (it's very similar), the primitive weapons, and the hit damage they do...I would imagine the mutations to be the equivalent of D&D spells, and the technology to be the equivalent of magic items. So that's the way that "Jake" and I wrote the GAMMA WORLD game, and the way I wrote Metamorphosis Alpha.
RPGA: "Jake" and you...is that "Jake" Jaquet, now publisher of DRAGON™ magazine?
JW: *RIGHT!*
RPGA: Did you write the manuscript and then give it to him and have him kick it around, and so forth, before publication?
JW: It turned out much like that, yes. I did a rough draft manuscript, and he added a good deal of material, and brought it into shape, and that's what they wanted.
RPGA: All of which, I'm sure, was ground through by TSR's Design and Development departments . . . .
JW: Many times.
RPGA: It is indeed a long and difficult process to get a new game published. Metamorphosis Alpha hasn't been seen for a while; was publication stopped?
JW: Well it was thought that Metamorphosis Alpha competed with the GAMMA WORLD game in sales. That is, people would buy one and not the other. And so what we wanted to do was kind of mutate it *(smiles)* into something that would be usable by everyone. So we're going to come out with a new booklet, METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA TO OMEGA. It'll be a boxed game supplement to the GAMMA WORLD game.
RPGA: Okay! So you can expand your GAMMA WORLD adventures not just on the surface of this future earth, but on out into space. Will this link in with TSR's new STAR FRONTIERS™ science fiction role playing game?
JW: No, it'll be completely different. The STAR FRONTIERS™ game is a much more technically oriented role playing

game. In other words, it's much more "down to earth" (chuckles). In the GAMMA WORLD and METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA TO OMEGA games, we're going to imagine weird, wild and crazy things that have no relation to physics or chemistry. We ignore things like that. It's more a *fantasy* science fiction game, as opposed to a "real-life" science fiction game.

RPGA: So the GAMMA WORLD game and the METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA TO OMEGA supplement will be Science Fantasy, as opposed to pure "orthodox" Science Fiction like the STAR FRONTIERS™ game?

JW: Exactly.

RPGA: I'm sure there's room for a couple of space games, that being one of the big interests these days.

WELL, what have you been doing since you started with TSR?

JW: I was in the Sales Department, handling inventory and other odd jobs, and I moved to the Education Department; I'm now the Director of Education. And we're working on educational products for TSR Hobbies, Inc.

RPGA: Such as?

JW: Well, we've got three modules that are 90% complete, and they deal with reading, mathematics, and general science. And we'll have more of them.

RPGA: Are these DUNGEONS & DRAGONS modules?

JW: Sort of...it's a simplified version of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game, sort of like the coloring book that we put out. It's geared for the people who have never heard of the D&D game, and don't know how to play it at all. And they're for the low-level grades: 4th, 5th, and 6th.

RPGA: They should hold a lot of attraction. What else, besides educational modules?

JW: Okay. We're working on some multi-adventure books. The multi-adventure book concept is one that has just recently hit the market. As you read the book, you come to a certain plot intersection, an important point in the story; and as the reader, you get to choose which direction the plot turns! In other words, you come to a scene where you can try to trick your way out of a certain situation, fight, or run away. And you get to choose what you do!

RPGA: Sounds good; are these based on the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game also?

JW: These are all D&D, as opposed to AD&D, paperbacks.

RPGA: But you don't need to know how to play? You can just read it?

JW: That's exactly right; it's just like a novel. Actually, it's probably better than most novels on the market today. And we have four that are completed, and we're starting to work on four more. And they should be out, hopefully, by the end of the summer!

RPGA: Very good! Did you write any of these books?

JW: Oh, no, Rose Estes wrote this entire series...a very talented member of the TSR work staff, in my Department.

RPGA: So, TSR is going into the paperback business; very interesting. We'll be looking for that.

What do you do when you go home at night?

JW: *(laughs)* I still live in Elkhorn. I'm a family man; I have three sons and a charming wife. I lead a typically normal wargame life...go home, paint my English Civil War miniatures, paint my Revolutionary War miniatures, think about writing a GAMMA WORLD module...these kind of things.

RPGA: Any pets around, mutated or otherwise?

JW: No, no; I don't do pets. *(laughs)* Don't like pets at all.

RPGA: You mentioned wargaming. This is getting back to the roots of role playing games; how long have you been playing miniatures games?

JW: Gary introduced me to all the many wargaming aspects — boardgames, miniatures, role playing games — and I've gotten interested in certain areas since then. History has always been one of my loves, and so historical miniatures really captured my attention. I have a goodly number of Ancients, Persians and Greeks. . . .

RPGA: What do you mean by "Ancients?"

JW: Ancient miniatures. 25 millimeter, and you paint them up in the clothing of the period, and you use different kinds of rules. I myself prefer *Classic Warfare* for the ancients rules, a TSR product that no longer is in print.

RPGA: Oh, how unfortunate.

JW: It really is, yes.

RPGA: How about Chainmail?

JW: Chainmail, that's a game that I know and love a lot. That's medieval, of course, and I have a goodly number of medieval miniatures also. Its system is perfectly suited for the D&D player who likes to have a visual battle with his characters or miniatures.

RPGA: Could you, in the course of a GAMMA WORLD or D&D game, work it around to a point where you're going to have a huge battle, and shift into miniatures rules?

JW: Well, not in a GAMMA WORLD game; it doesn't lend itself to huge battles because of the extreme deadliness of the environment. It's much better to go around in smaller groups. In my campaign, the environment tends to get rather hostile towards large invasions, so it reacts violently to big groups.

RPGA: The environment itself?

JW: Yes.

RPGA: Interesting .... but this is possible with a D&D game?

JW: Oh yes, it's very possible. I've had many an enjoyable battle with elvish armies against orc and ogre armies, or dwarven armies against some dragon. It's great fun.

RPGA: You mentioned that you do paint a lot; I imagine that there's a lot of fine detail painting involved in a miniatures hobby. Do you have any preferences in brushes, paints, or what-have-you?

JW: Well I use Teka brushes, and I use a water-based paint that is used in ceramics. It's very inexpensive and it provides a lot of colors that the other paints don't come up with. Plus I can get a fairly large bottle for a fairly inexpensive cost, which I really appreciate.

RPGA: Do you have a special painting area set aside at home?

JW: Yes, the living room. My wife objects violently, but luckily she has an understanding heart.

RPGA: Yes, she must.

JW: So I paint there, and accidentally spill on chairs every once and a while. I quickly wipe it up without her noticing, and that way I continue to exist.

RPGA: Who do you play the miniatures games with, these days?

JW: Oh, mostly TSR people. There's a large miniaturist group within the company, and we get together and have a great deal of fun.

RPGA: Sounds good. Anybody we know?

JW: Ah...Tom Moldvay; you might recall, he's written a lot of articles. Jeff Perren, of course, the author of Chainmail; Ernest Gygax, Gary's son, plays miniatures and is a fine tactician; Tom Wham, inventor of the games that you find in the DRAGON™ magazine, and the SNITS REVENGE™ game and those things....

RPGA: Well, since you're using your living room as a painting studio, I imagine you must have to play these on a bed or something...

JW: *(laughs)* No, no. What we do is we go in the Dungeon Hobby Shop, in the basement, and there's fine facilities for wargames of all sorts.

RPGA: Here in Lake Geneva?

JW: Yes.

RPGA: Are these games open to the public?

JW: Why, yes, as a matter of fact they are. People frequently come down and watch the weirdness that goes on.

RPGA: And all the famous people involved. Do you play GAMMA WORLD games these days, or do you run more games than you play?
JW: Actually, as with Gary, I wind up running more games than I wind up playing. People around here say to themselves, "Well, why should we start a GAMMA WORLD campaign when Jim has one?" And so it usually doesn't happen. So I usually judge.
RPGA: Do you have a campaign that runs on a regular basis?
JW: No, not right now. We're kind of into the miniatures aspect right now. Everyone's doing different periods, and so we do a lot of miniatures battles on the weekends.
RPGA: Do you have any favorite games, other than miniatures and role playing?
JW: I really like the "Alexander the Great" boardgame, by Avalon Hill. Of course, Gary did that one also, and I think that's very good, but..."Imperium," a fine science fiction space game; like that a lot. "Klondike" — that's a game about gold rush time. A little backgammon every once in a while, when I can talk my sons into it, or Intellivision on the TV. They've got so they don't want to play that with me any more, because I always beat them.
RPGA: A great sadness. *(Editor's note: This is one of Jim's favorite sayings.)*
JW: *(laughs)* Yes . . . .
RPGA: Speaking of video games, do you play any of those with any regularity, or pinballs?
JW: Why yes, as a matter of fact, Gary also introduced me to the wide world of pinball. I'm a great Black Hole pinball machine enthusiast, yes. And of the video games, I think probably...that's tough. There are so many good ones out today. Scramble is quite enjoyable; I enjoy Asteroids...Crazy Climber I'm quite good at. I have gotten to the fifth building in Crazy Climber, which is quite an accomplishment.
RPGA: Indeed. When you wrote up the GAMMA WORLD game — with the help of "Jake," who we'll talk to in another interview — how did things get started, what problems did you encounter, and what were you trying to do overall?
JW: Well, overall we were just trying to make a bigger and better MA version on a planet. And I imagine the scope gave us a lot of problems, and we still haven't covered it completely in the latest edition of the game. It's so big, when you have a whole planet that you blow away in an atomic war, or a "strange" war, I guess you'd call it, and the scope kind of boggles people.

Y'know, they grab the game and they start reading the rules, and they say, "Well, do we have to create a whole planet worth?" And actually, I think if I had to do it all over again, I would have said, "Well, just take a state — like maybe Wisconsin, since I'm most familiar with that — and plot out some of the main things that would be *left*. And *then*, go from there, and don't try to do a whole great big world, a whole great big area." And I think that would work out much better. Y'know, it's a lot like picking up a D&D set, and trying to fill the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ map up with things, which is of course quite hard to do.
RPGA: Sure. Do GAMMA WORLD adventures mostly occur in given small areas, or are they more wilderness types, or what?
JW: Well, I usually, when I've played or when I talk to others about playing, I usually suggest that they have a village that has all sorts of types — Mutants, Pure Strain Humans, Animal Mutants — and that they work with the village as a base of operations and they go out from there. And I tell them that there should be one or two surviving installations within fifty miles, and there should be some interesting terrain features — mountains, valleys, that type of thing. And they usually start with small groups, going out and finding out what's in the area.

I'm a firm believer of giving a lot to the beginning player, in the way of discovered items, pets, helpful creatures . . . because the GAMMA WORLD environment is so deadly.
RPGA: The deadliness of the environment would seem to cut down on the life of the player characters, and thus decrease your identification with them. Does this detract from the game, or can you hang onto a character for long enough to have him mean something?
JW: Well that has been brought up *many* times, but I've found that people take survival as a challenge, and that they become even more enthusiastic about the game as each death occurs. They say to themselves, "Okay, we ran into this situation and we DIED, so when we pick our next characters, let's pick them with this in mind, so that they survive even longer." And what my GAMMA WORLD players learn eventually is that *caution* is the key word, and that there are several mutations that are very helpful in survival: Total Healing, to cure up all your hit points, much like the *heal* spell; Life Leech, which gives you hit points taken from your enemies...I don't know if this really has an equivalent in the D&D system...
RPGA: Vampiric Ring of Regeneration.

JW: Something like that, yes. And the mutations that you pick or, in the case of a Pure Strain Human, the people you connect with or the things that you have, all go toward survival.
RPGA: So the player learns, but the characters don't last long?
JW: Well, there are exceptions, of course; like Gary and the group that he plays with. They have some very long-surviving characters, and they do this because they are cautious. And so, he's probably been in 20 or 30 games with one or two characters! So I imagine it's the intelligence of the group.

Experienced D&D players often do well after the first death, because they realize that caution is the key word and that you have to be careful as you go on. You know, it's very similar to having a room full of poisons and bombs and weapons, and letting a child in there. Well, if the child survives the first three explosions and the first five gun shots, it's gonna learn not to *play* with these kind of things! So that's what The GAMMA WORLD game is like, you just have to be very careful.

RPGA: The AD&D game system is very tightly interwoven and interrelated, so that it works as a whole, and there are rules and laws for almost everything that you'd want to do. In the GAMMA WORLD game, however, everything is changing, and everything is changing *all the time.* Now, do you think this reflects any tendencies in yourself? And why did you make it such a crazy, changing game?

JW: Well, I think back to a marvelous phrase that I read once: One of the problems with D&D and AD&D games is that when you come to the vampire, everyone knows to pull out their cross, throw down their garlic juice, get the clerics up front, and grab the mallet and wooden stake. In other words, even though there are a plethora of monsters in both game systems, knowing what to do against monsters can be easily accomplished with a good memory.

Well, I didn't want this to happen in the GAMMA WORLD or Metamorphosis Alpha games. The concept of change has always been a fun and interesting one to me; and that's why the radiation has a great deal to do with the game, and that causes change. It's much like red kryptonite, in the superman episodes. In other words, superman never knew what a chunk of red kryptonite was gonna do to him until it *did* it to him! Well, having monsters change and not be the same, or having the judge mutate the monsters that are already given, can cause a great deal of worry and concern for the player, which is an enjoyable part of the game.

RPGA: For the game master.

JW: Yeah, or the player; I think that when the player comes to a two-headed Orlan, and knows from the *book* that they have Life Leech and poisoned claws, but when they turn out to be *nice* and robot killers, well, that's just something that has to be accepted and dealt with.

RPGA: Okay. But to get back to the original question: Do you think that this reflects something of yourself, the way that the system works?

JW: *(stubbornly)* No, I don't think it does.

RPGA: Well, you have been described as a "hard-core chaotic," though quite good. Why do you think you've gotten this reputation?

JW: Well, I like action. As we're playing in an adventure, I have a tendency to say to myself, "We're being a bit too cautious here, we're being a bit too slow; let's do things to jazz everything up!" And so I have a tendency to do acts that my peers consider chaotic, but I just consider "action stimulation," as it were.

RPGA: Oh, well; back to games: does a GAMMA WORLD game usually avoid stretches of description and planning, and have more action all the way through it than other role playing games?

JW: I think that there is more action in GAMMA WORLD games, as opposed to other games. I don't know about planning; I think that's an important aspect of any role playing game. But I have a tendency to try and make my players move along, do things hard and fast, the best they can.

RPGA: TSR Hobbies sells as many GAMMA WORLD games as the GDW people sell Traveller games. This is a noteworthy fact —

JW: Actually, we sell more a month than they do, but that's okay ....

RPGA: Okay, as the case may be. Yet we hear more about Traveller. Why doesn't the GAMMA WORLD game have as big a reputation?

JW: Well, Traveller has lots of people writing supplements for it, and unfortunately only Gary Gygax and myself are writing GAMMA WORLD things — well, "Jake" does things for DRAGON™ magazine, and that shouldn't be discounted. But because of the wide circulation of the supplemental material for Traveller, it would *seem* to take a bigger role in science fiction games.

RPGA: Are there plans to come up with more GW supplements for the future?

JW: Well, I've already given several modules to the development boys — but that's a slow and lengthy process — and Gary and Brian Blume have a few things worked up. So yes, we are going to get things out.

RPGA: What advice would you give to a GAMMA WORLD player besides caution? How does one have the best time at playing a GAMMA WORLD game?

JW: Well, I think if you get your judge to let you select your mutations, that's very important. I know that the primary way of creating a character in a GAMMA WORLD game is to roll at random; but I think that selection of mutations — if you're a mutant — is vital to the survival of the character.

For Pure Strain Humans, we've decided that they don't have enough benefits in the current rules, and we're going to vastly revise them so that Pure Strain Humans have a much better chance of survival. We're going to give them 8-sided hit dice; we're going to give them a 3 bonus in Intelligence and Charisma; we're going to make it so that the technology that is left works better for them than mutants. We're going to make robots respond to them, much more so than mutants. In fact, in my game there's a general tendency for intelligent mechanical devices to try to kill mutants and try to help humans, so they've picked up on this. We want to make the Pure Strain Human a more viable character.

RPGA: How about advice for GAMMA WORLD game masters?

JW: Primarily, take an area where you live and destroy it, one way or another—

RPGA: On paper.

JW: *On paper,* of course, and use the area in your game. In other words, if you live in a small rural town and there's an army base 10 miles away and there's mountains and hills a couple of miles further, use *all* of this. Use your area, your knowledge of the environment. Don't try to do Cape Canaveral, or Cape Kennedy, if you don't live near there and you don't know what it's like. Use what you know of the present to make your game; I think you'll wind up having a much more detailed game than other ones.

RPGA: Do you encourage game masters to create their own monsters?

JW: Oh, yes. I want them to do that, or at least mutate the ones we have in the book already.

RPGA: Do you have any guidelines to offer?

JW: For creating monsters: normally don't give them more than 20 hit dice; don't let them do more than 3-18 points of damage in any given melee round; give them one or two mutations that would be helpful in their environment. You don't want a creature that lives in a wintery area to have a lot of cold — Cryonesis, that type of thing. The nature of the creatures should fit the environments they live in.

RPGA: The cold creature should have heat abilities?

JW: Pyrotechnics, anything along those lines; regeneration, those kind of things. Something that it would have because it lives in the area it lives in.

RPGA: How about research? Are there any particular books, films, or TV shows, even, that would help a GAMMA WORLD game master to get more ideas?

JW: There are a great number of books that are "holocaust" books. "Path To Savagery," can't remember the author, but the polar ice caps melt and the water rises; and this guy is going to New York to check things out. "Starship," of course, by Brian Aldiss, is a good one. Let's see, what else? "Wrinkle in Time" isn't a holocaust book but has a lot of good ideas about mutation and that kind of thing.

"Mutie," by Piers Anthony, marvelous book, has giant mutated chickens that have all sorts of weird powers, and they activate their powers by going cluck-cluck. It's really a kick. *(laughs)* Jack Williamson's "Humanoid" is kind of a weird book, about androids that just want to help man, but the way they do it isn't too cool. There's lots of good stuff out there; just look for holocaust books. "Lucifer's Hammer" . . . .

RPGA: That gives us a lot of good clues. What have you got in mind for the future, besides finishing up "MA to O" and combining it?

JW: Well, Tom Wham (inventor of Snit Smashing and all those good things) and I have a game called Planet Busters, where we've taken the solar system, and each planet has become worth something in the far future. And there's a struggle to acquire these planets. They use warships, fuel supplies...it's a very basic game, along the same lines as Tom's games in DRAGON™ magazine. And that will be printed in the magazine, and hopefully be turned into a minigame in a year.

RPGA: Why isn't there a GAMMA WORLD column in DRAGON™ magazine?

JW: Well, first of all I like to encourage other people to write things. I don't want people to get into the "Jim Ward" bloc, as it were, and play the game as Jim Ward would play it. And second of all, I DID submit several things that they have on file. There seems to be a hesitancy to print them; I guess my writing style isn't quite what the editors would enjoy.

RPGA: But you are renowned in the area for top ideas, so I'm sure we'll see this sort of thing soon; possibly in collaboration with another good author or editor like "Jake."

JW: Well, it could be, but I like writing for the RPGA newsletter. That's kind of fun. I wrote for the British equivalent, too, for the D&D Players Assocation.

RPGA: What have you written about for them? A GAMMA WORLD article?

JW: Yes; I wrote them a story on how to design and get your games printed, and I sent them a GAMMA WORLD piece.

RPGA: Well, we'll continue to print various articles about GAMMA WORLD games and soon about your others. And thanks for the monsters, this issue; will you be one of the judges for the art contest?

JW: I'd like to; it sounds like a lot of fun.

RPGA: You sure know the most about the various creatures; you can see how the art matches up to your visualizations of them.

I think I first saw your name as far back as the Gods, Demigods & Heroes book, which came out — when? '75?

JW: '75, '76, something like that. It's a while back.

RPGA: Why were *you* the one to write about gods?

JW: Well, Rob Kuntz had the idea for the Gods, Demigods & Heroes book. In other words, he wanted to create a bunch of pantheons that would be used in D&D games. And I thought it was a great idea, and because of my historical background, knowledge of Greek myths, Norse mythology, that type of thing, I said I'd be glad to help. And he said, "Sure, why not?" And so I wound up doing the lion's share of the research in those. And we set it up, and we had it printed, and it turned out pretty good.

RPGA: And then you two together came up with the newer work?

JW: Well, I wanted to do an AD&D version in a hardbound book. And Rob said he was interested, but he wound up not having too much time to do it. So I wound up writing all of it, and with the help of Lawrence Schick, the editor, we put together *that*. And that's been very successful; I've been quite pleased.

RPGA: The DEITIES & DEMIGODS book has gone over quite well, with a lot of very valuable information for AD&D games, but it *has* been criticized as being anything from insulting to incomplete. Your response?

JW: There are several responses, of course. *(laughs)* I worried about the religions that are still active, and so I tried to put in my introduction that we meant *no* offense to any existing religions, and that we only were reporting on what was historical. In other words, it was kind of a treatise on religion and mythology in a game format.

As for being incomplete, it's of course very obvious that we only had so much room for each pantheon. And in all, we didn't include half, or even a tenth, of all the information possible; we tried to hit the high spots in the mythologies, and I think we did a good job.

RPGA: Noteworthy omissions from the text include the Christian and Judeo mythoi —

JW: Oh, *of course.*

RPGA: Why "Of course?"

JW: Well, I don't believe that the input of one's own religion should take part in a game format. It kind of lacks respect. And so we purposely didn't put in any reference at all to that.

RPGA: Would including a mythos very close to current beliefs in the country of publication make the game closer to a reality simulation, rather than just a game?

JW: (*evasively*) Well, I don't think Gary, in his original concept, or myself, ever wanted to make it a reality simulation. We want to make sure that everyone knows that this is just a wild and crazy role playing game, and any connection with reality is purely accidental, and not meant to be taken seriously.

RPGA: I see. Well, there's a rumor about, these days, that two of the mythoi are going to be pulled out of the book for future editions: the Lovecraft gods (Cthulhu and so forth) and the Melnibonean section. Why?

JW: It's a great sadness, it really is. Both of these mythoi have surviving controllers. In other words, the Melnibonean mythos is controlled, of course, by Michael Moorcock, in England. And he sold rights to a game based on this mythos to another company. And the Lovecraft mythos is also controlled, by a group out of Wisconsin, and they sold their rights too.

And to prevent any sort of conflict of interest, we decided to drop these two mythoi from future editions. Remember, though, that even though we do have to drop them, the book will still be larger than our average AD&D book — larger than the Players Handbook or the Monster Manual. And so it'll still be a good value.

RPGA: Oh, I'm sure; there was an awful lot of work and cross-checking involved in that product.

What are the differences between the *Gods, Demigods & Heroes* and *Deities & Demigods* works?

JW: Well, I think it's one of detail. There's

very much more detail and structure in DDG, the AD&D work. We've really listed them all, and try to maintain that this is the *end-all* to each mythos. In other words, Odin has certain powers, and you don't add to these powers. Whereas, of course, in GD&H, the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS work, you can play with them and add things that they might not have had historically. We've been very careful to give the gods their historical powers, as opposed to made-up powers.

RPGA: One of the things *I've* noticed about DDG involves certain of the demigods not having any clerical abilites, but yet being able to grant clerical spells, according to the AD&D system. Why were some of them omitted from having clerical abilities?

JW: Well, the problem with demigods is that in most cases they've risen from mortality. For example, if you have a magic-user who becomes 20th level in a world where the average is 6th level, well, he raises to the status of a demigod in one pantheon or another. And he really shouldn't *have*, logically speaking, clerical spells. He is a deity, is higher and more able than the normal mortal, but his field of expertise is not the clerical field. And so, while he assumes more power, given to him by his sponsoring deity, that power is the power that's given from the worshippers of the gods. So that while the magic-user can bestow clerical powers on people down below, he doesn't get the clerical abilities because he never had any in his normal life!

RPGA: But this leads to a contradiction, that, for instance, he can grant the casting of a *raise dead* but can't cast it himself. How does this work out?

JW: Well, I guess it's kind of like accountants; it's mathemagics. You just say to yourself, "Well, how am I gonna rationalize this today?" and your rationale is that "The gods have ruled it so."

RPGA: Okay; I guess whatever works.

JW: I guess! *(laughs)*

RPGA: You have been seen in public a couple of times; we were fortunate enough to have you around once or twice specially at RPGA meetings and at the GEN CON East and GEN CON conventions this past year. Do you plan to keep going to conventions like you have been, and are you going to run games?

JW: Well, usually I went to many of the conventions out of Wisconsin with the Sales Department, because they needed a person that could not only do sales but could run games, since I do have the knowledge of all the TSR games. And I don't know if I'll be traveling as before, now that I'm with the Education department; but whenever I go to a convention, I like to run a GAMMA WORLD game.

I like to help out with the other role playing games, because it sems like we always have a demand for TOP SECRET® or BOOT HILL™ or FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ games, and they need people to run them. And so, if you have the knowledge, I guess you do the duty; it's as simple as that. I have been told, by some, that I do have a judging ability; I think it extends itself into all the role playing games.

In other words, Gary and Rob Kuntz showed me how to judge the D&D game, and so I became fairly proficient at it; and I think that extends itself to the other games that TSR makes, and that other people make. So that if you're really a good D&D judge, and if you take the time to learn the rules, you'll be a good judge at BOOT HILL and GAMMA WORLD games; it's all a matter of knowing the rules, and your own style.

RPGA: What do you do when you go to conventions?

JW: Well, normally I look for good buys; I'm always interested in holocaust games, and I'm always interested in new miniatures. And I run lots of games; at East I ran games almost nonstop, for the four or five days we were there. In fact, I can remember quite vividly having my door knocked on early in the morning, and someone running in and saying "Jim! Jim! We need you to run an RPGA game!" And I valiantly got up, and got dressed, and did a marvelous job running the game, as I recall. *(wryly)*

RPGA: And we appreciate it. When you look for bargains, do you ever shop for miniatures at a convention?

JW: Oh, yes. I always run first to the miniatures areas — Grenadier, being the official AD&D line, and others —and see what they have. Like at the GEN CON dealer area this year, there was a booth, TA-HR miniatures, and they had these real neat looking weird aliens, and I bought a couple packages of those. And I like Minifigs; right now I'm painting up the English Civil War miniatures, and they have a marvelous line of those. Then of course the new games. It seems like conventions are always the place where the big game companies like to premier their new games, so I like to look around, see what's there to buy; stuff that's usable in my GAMMA WORLD campaign, D&D games, that sort of thing.

RPGA: For your own campaign, personal use only, do you ever get new ideas for new GAMMA WORLD creatures by fiddling with miniature figures?

JW: Not so much miniatures, but other games...Quirks is a game that creates mutated characters, that's kind of enjoyable to play. Cosmic Encounter has a lot of neat characters that are quite usable in the GAMMA WORLD system. And so I get ideas from games that come out, not so much miniatures.

RPGA: Let's get serious for a bit. Why are you continually interested — some may say obsessed — with a coming holocaust, or the "future" of radiation and mutations? Do you think this goes back to our early nuclear scares, and our current threats of war? Does this prey upon your mind?

JW: Well, I don't know that it preys upon my mind. My dad, who's a lifer in the National Guard and has made his career in it, believes that we are heading for this type of crisis, and I kind of agree with him. I just can't imagine this continual buildup, that Russia and America and all the other bloc countries have, I can't imagine this buildup continuing without being used. Some weird rebel group in the Middle East, or maybe even an ally, is just going to decide some day that they're tired of being pushed around and it's time to push that little red button!

I don't have canned food and water in my basement, but — there's a strange guy named Nostradamus, from the 1400's, and he gave a prediction that in 1999, in June, the world will be covered in atomic fire. So my brother Larry and I have decided that we're going to move to Australia in *May* of 1999, because no one's going to bother tossing a bomb at Australia. *(laughs)* And hopefully we'll live there for a couple of months and nothing will happen. But if it does, we'll be ready.

So I don't know if I'm a survivalist: y'know, one of these people that *wants* to be ready. I've bought a bow, and all, and I'm picking up skills in that area. And I suppose it's just in the subconscious; it isn't really a big thing of itself, though.

RPGA: Many people, however, are reluctant to even talk about this subject, whereas you've written games and articles and so forth about it. Why do you think you can face it more stalwartly than other people?

JW: Well, I think we all live with the concept in our minds; we just don't address it directly. Probably the way I can face it is that I say to myself, "Well, Chicago is a primary target and Milwaukee is a secondary target. And there's going to be a lot of misses," *(laughs)* "so when the button finally does happen, I probably won't be around, so I'm not worried about it too much." But if I *am* around, I want to...I don't know if I want to...I don't think I *want* to be around, to tell you the truth!

RPGA: Well, what would Jim Ward want to do and be if he had his 'druthers — of anything and anybody?

JW: I'm quite sure that Jim Ward would want to be the commander of the starship Enterprise, going boldly forth to encounter new and unusual things.

RPGA: Mutant planets ....

JW: Among other things.

RPGA: What is Jim Ward *likely* to be doing?

JW: He's likely to grow old in Elkhorn, Wisconsin, maybe writing some regular novels, and continuing to wargame until he's 113.

RPGA: Well, thank you much.

CHRIS WEISER Wins RPGA™ FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ Game

The Role Playing Game Association's first official FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ tournament game was held on Sunday, August 16th at the GEN CON® battle, and the players were aligned as follows:

GERMAN	AMERICAN
John Danovich Fokker D VII (160) 8350'	Paul Cote Nieuport 28 8200'
Chris Weiser Fokker D VII (185) 8200'	Jim Quinn Nieuport 28 8200'
Gail Taylor Fokker Dr I 8200'	Jeff Wilkins SPAD XIII 8200'
Alan Christensen Albatros C XII pilot 8200'	
Dave Jedlicka Albatros C XII observer 8200'	

A hard-fought battle ensued as each pilot sought to bring his guns to bear against the enemy. Here is a turn-by-turn account of the action...

1st Turn, Elapsed Time 0:00

As the two formations closed, each pilot singled out an enemy to engage. Jeff Wilkins' SPAD was the object of two German attacks, as Chris Weiser maneuvered his Fokker D VII onto its tail while Alan Christensen brought the big Albatros C XII into a nose-up bottom attack. Weiser's burst of fire missed the SPAD, but Christensen's bullets found the mark as he put 3 hit factors (3hf) into the American plane. Christensen's observer, Dave Jedlikca, joined Gale Taylor in his Fokker D VII in a dual attack upon Cote's Nieuport 28, and each one scored 3hf.

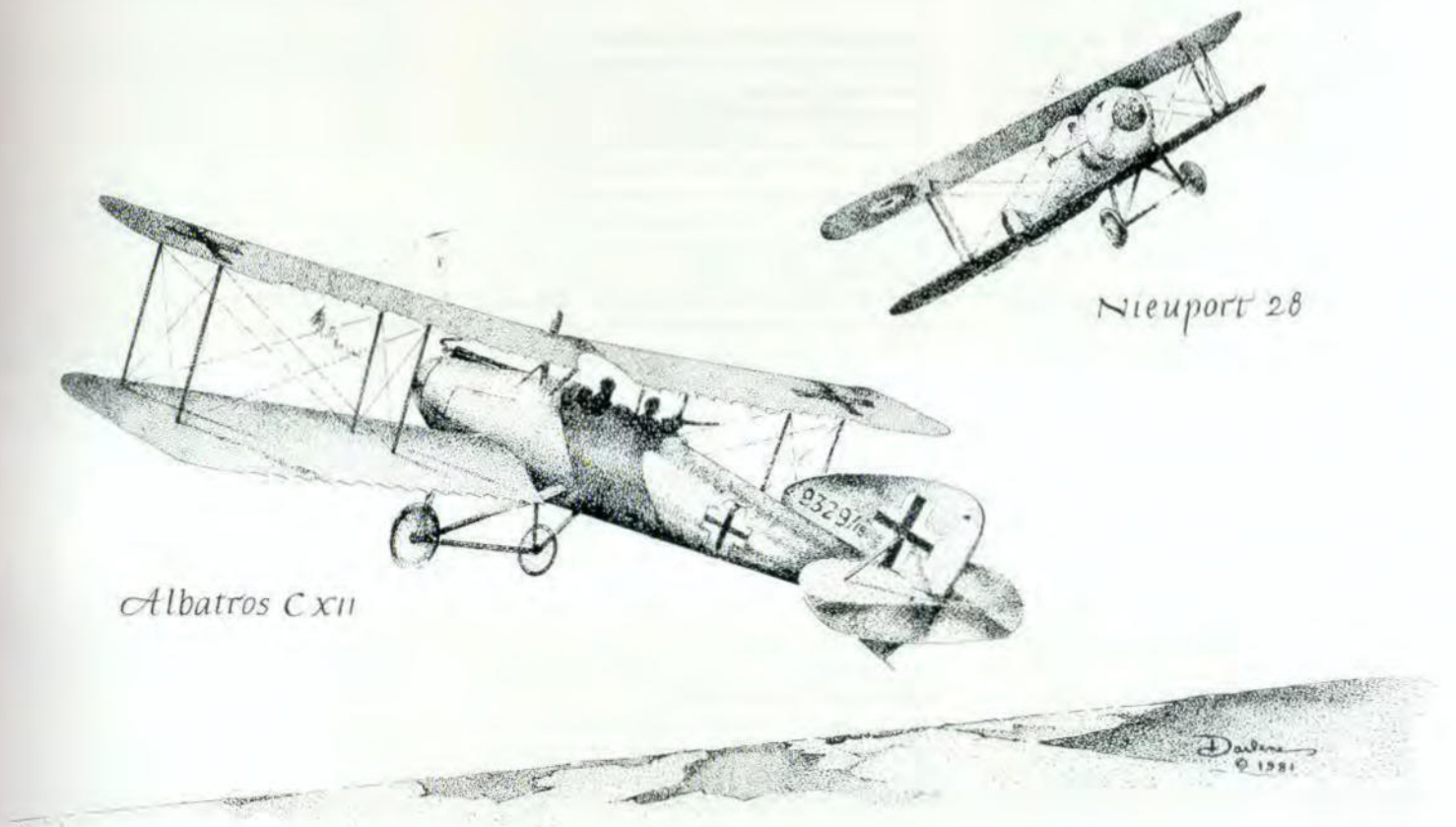
The last German, John Danovich, dropped onto the tail of Jim Quinn's nose-down Nieuport 28 and scored a 4hf burst on the American plane.

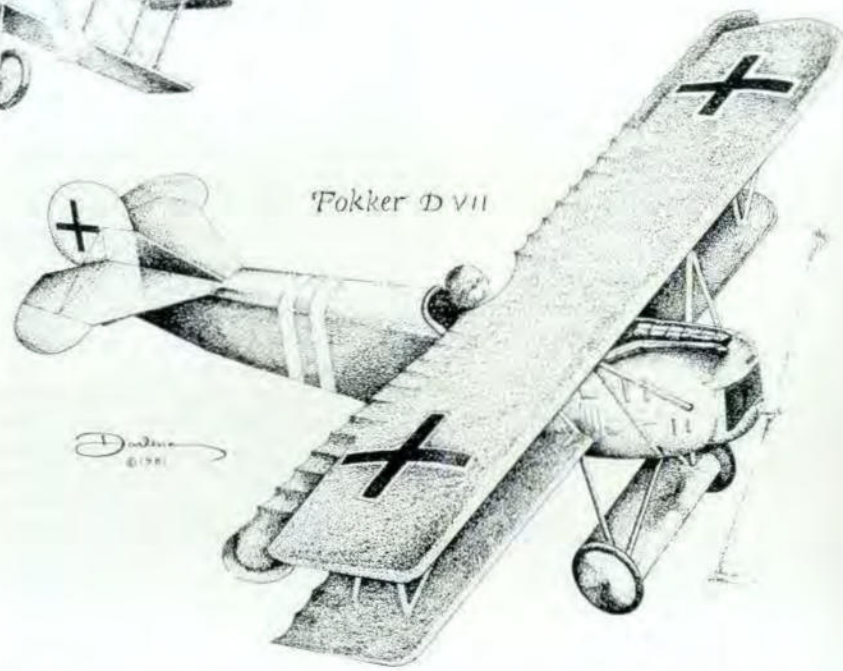
The Americans were not taking this punishment unanswered. Jim Quinn's Nieuport was spitting lead into Weiser's Fokker in a top attack, scoring 6hf. Meanwhile, Paule Cote raked the bottom of Weiser's plane, scoring 7 hits all along the fuselage from engine to tail. Maybe this hail of fire was the reason why Weiser's shot was a miss!

2nd Turn, Elapsed Time 0:20

The second turn began with a wingover by Quinn in his Nieuport 28. The German on his tail, Danovich, followed in his D VII but had to give up 100' of altitude to hang onto the Nieuport's tail. His guns were silent, though, as he tried to work on his jammed gun. Christensen's Albatros came to offer support, and the wily two-seater pilot scored single hit on Quinn's aircraft.

Quinn's wingman, Wilkins, was quick to come to his aid in his SPAD XIII. The SPAD did a fast barrel roll to the right with Weiser's D VII in hot pursuit, then swung around and underneath Danovich's Fokker. Wilkins loosed a burst to aid his wingman, but missed. Weiser clung onto his tail, though, and kept the SPAD in his sights — racking the American plane with 8 hit factors of damage. The other American, Cote, was also in the thick of things. He pulled his Nieuport up and over in an Immelmann turn, and Taylor followed the move in his nimble Fokker Dr I triplane. Cote pointed his nose and Vickers guns at the belly of the Albatros C XII and pumped an effective





burst into the nose-up machine, scoring 7 hf and sending bullets past both the pilot and observer. Taylor followed, but abandoned the tail angle attacks to try a new approach from Cote's side. Taylor's 3 hits were a reminder to Cote that the German threat was still real.

In the back seat of the big Albatros, observer Dave Jedlicka swung his Parabellum gun from side to side in search of the best shot. A quick burst at the belly of an American plane was a test at 200' range, but the bullets missed...

3rd Turn, Elapsed Time 0:40

After Weiser's effective burst, Wilkins swung his SPAD into a right turn. This maneuver was not anticipated by the German, so Weiser broke off his attack to seek new prey. But Wilkins was not yet safe from German guns, for Christensen pulled his lumbering Albatros two-seater into a top attack on the SPAD, scoring 3 hit factors to add insult to injury. In the back seat, Jedlicka was pulling the empty ammo drum off his Parabellum gun and putting on a fresh one to return to the action.

Quinn, with Danovich still on his tail, pulled his Nieuport 28 into a tight loop. The German countered by following, though his diagonal angle made it difficult to stay close to the American plane. Quinn ignored his pursuer, however, and sought a close range bottom attack on Weiser's Fokker D VII, putting 3 hits into the German plane (and 2 of them into the cockpit, narrowly missing Weiser himself!) Danovich seized the advantage and regained a good position by coming up underneath Quinn's nose-up plane, scoring 2 hf, and retaining the tailing position.

Meanwhile, Cote maneuvered his Nieuport into a position above Weiser's Fokker, putting in 2 hf to make his presence felt. Taylor in his Fokker Dr I continued to dog the American, though, and scored 2 hits of his own on Cote's plane in retaliation.

4th Turn, Elapsed Time 1:00

After a full minute of combat, the dogfight continued at full intensity, but gun jams were lessening the shooting effectiveness of most planes.

Cote flew straight to shake a zooming Taylor off his tail, and Taylor climbed in his triplane. As Wilkins powered straight away in his SPAD, Christensen pulled the lumbering German two-seater around and into a 100' tail shot on Cote's Nieuport, Scoring 1 hf. Weiser flew just underneath the Albatros C XII to combine his fire on Cote with Christensen's and added 3 more hits to Cote's plane.

Quinn responded to the German actions by climbing toward Taylor's Fokker, loosing a burst from below at 300' range which missed. Danovich followed right along with a climb of his own, but missed his 200' tail shot at Quinn.

5th Turn, Elapsed Time 1:20

Cote now was in the gunsights of two German pilots, and he chose to split-s downward in an attempt to elude them. Weiser and Christensen were both caught by surprise by this sudden maneuver. Weiser pulled up and away with a climb, while Christensen put the big C XII into an Immelmann, its Mercedes engine screaming.

Wilkins, away from the action briefly, turned his SPAD around to rejoin the fray. Coming underneath the German two- seater looked easy, but his bullets missed the mark at close range. His wingman, Quinn, chose to do an Immelmann in yet another try to shake his pursuer. But Danovich was not to be denied, and he followed. Quinn nosed his Nieuport up under Weiser's Fokker at point-blank range, putting 2 hf into it. Danovich held on to Quinn's tail, but only managed to single hit. Quinn's position put him in front of and above the German two-seater, so Christensen and Jedlicka took the opportunity to fire at 350' range. Christensen found the mark with a single hit, but Jedlicka's aim was faulty and he missed.

6th Turn, Elapsed Time 1:40

Cote, now at a lower altitude after his split-s manuever, started to climb back up toward the action. Taylor, away from the fight for a moment, saw Cote's Nieuport heading upward and dropped down on his tail — but missed his shot! Quinn climbed, and his "shadow" Danovich followed — but did not fire due to jammed guns. Danovich had now stayed on Quinn's tail for 5 straight turns, an incredible feat.

The Albatros C XII turned to clear the area, but Wilkins pursued from below. His shots into the big fuselage found the mark, as a slug tore into Christensen's arm — a light wound! Weiser went to the aid of the two-seater with a 50' tail attack on the nose-up SPAD of Wilkins, pouring 8 hf into the American plane.

7th Turn, Elapsed Time 2:00

Unable to continue tailing due to an altitude disadvantage, Danovich's Fokker lost its pursuit of Quinn's Nieuport. Quinn proved that he still had plenty of fight left, though, by turning back and onto Danovich's tail at 9300'. Quinn returned the fire of his tormentor by scoring 4 hf.

Meanwhile, Wilkins pulled a left turn to shake Weiser off his tail. Christensen shook off the effects of his wound long enough to take over for Weiser, and dropped the Albatros C XII into a lower-altitude tail shot where both he and his observer could shoot. He scored 2 hits, but the hard-luck gunner Jedlicka missed again.

8th Turn, Elapsed Time 2:20

With the planes spread apart, the action was diminished, with pilots attempting to clear jammed guns and waiting for an advantage to return to the fight.

Wilkins pulled his SPAD XIII into a loop to shake the German two-seater. Christensen pulled the Albatros C XII into a climb, still nursing his injury.

The Quinn-Danovich duel continued, as Danovich dived and Quinn followed, putting a 4 hf into the German Fokker. Meanwhile, Taylor brought his Fokker Dr I back for another shot at Cote's tail, and scored 4 hf.

Behind him, Wilkins had Weiser, who had followed the bank left and throttled back to keep the battered SPAD in his gunsights. Weiser kept his guns right on the SPAD, his shots ripping the wings and hitting the pilot. Wilkins slumped over the cockpit as the SPAD slid off on one wing, falling out of control.

11th Turn, Elapsed Time 3:20

Suddenly, it was over. Cote headed home at full speed and pulled away from Christensen and Jedlicka's Albatros C XII and Taylor's Fokker Dr I. Quinn's smoking Nieuport joined Cote, leaving a trail of black smoke across the sky in its wake.

Danovich continued in his bank until he was able to free his jammed controls. Weiser watched Wilkins' SPAD spin inexorably toward the ground. When it hit and exploded over a minute later, it was a decisive end to a hard-earned victory and another fight in the skies....

* * * * * * * *

Although it may appear that a 5 to 3 edge in the players gave the Germans an advantage, in actuality the situation was fairly balanced. The strengths and weaknesses of each particular type of aircraft largely counterbalanced each other. Since all players were knowledgeable and skilled, they were able to use those strengths and weaknesses to their advantage. The two-seater was an "extra" for the German side, but due to its lesser firepower and performance was not a major unbalancing factor. Players determined their sides and aircraft through random dice rolls, so no one was afforded any particular advantage. As can be noted, there were two pilot hits in the game. The fact that Wilkins' hit was fatal and Christensen's was only a light wound was the ultimate difference in the scoring. Had these come out the opposite way, the result would have been considerable changed.

As the scoring breakdown shows, Chris Weiser was the high scorer and overall winner. Was it any surprise? Chris is the two-time champion (1974 & 1976) of the FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ Society's invitational Masters Game. His prize was a beautiful set of 4 foil prints of WW I aerial action, suitable for framing and supplied by the RPGA.

The RPGA's first official FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ game was a success, and the official scores are recorded for RPGA rating.

The next official RPGA FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ event will be at the GEN CON® South convention in Jacksonville, Florida on February 5th, 6th and 7th.

FINAL SCORING OUTLINE
RPGA GAME

PLAYER NAME	HF SCORED	KILLS	ASSISTS	SURVIVAL	HF TAKEN	FRIENDLY A/C DOWN	DOWNED	ESCAPE PENALTY	FINAL POINTS
TEAM # AMERICANS									
Jeff Wilkins	+30				-37		-35		-42
Jim Quinn	+38			+15	-14	-2			+37
Paul Cote	+44			+15	-33	-2			+24
GRAND TOTAL: =19									
TEAM # GERMANS									
Gale Taylor	+38			+15					+53
John Danovich	+26			+15	-26				+15
Chris Weiser	+70	+30		+15	-20				+95 s/d Wilkins
Al Christensen	+24			+15	-10				+29
Dave Jedlicka	+8			+15	-10		(+15)*		+28
GRAND TOTAL: =225									

***(bonus as observer)**

DAWN PATROL™ Preview

Medals & Commendations

By Designer Mike Carr

The new FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ 7th Edition is going to be called the DAWN PATROL™ game, with an emphasis on its popular role playing aspects. There are some interesting new rules to add "flavor" to the careers of each pilot personality — like the possibility of winning medals. Here's a preview....

Pilots who compile successful service records eventually become eligible for medals and commendations. Each nationality has its own awards and honors to bestow on its most successful airmen.

Medals and commendations fall into two categories — those given for length of service (and achievement) and those given for a specific act of outstanding bravery. Winning these awards also depends on luck; service records show that political, personal and bureaucratic factors often affect the timeliness of awards, much to the consternation of the deserving pilots. That explains why in some instances one pilot may receive an award

Award	*Eligibility*	*Type*	*Appearance*	*Prerequisites*	*Criteria*
German					
Knight's Cross of the Royal House Order of Hohenzollern (Prussian)*	Officers, All Germans	Service	Uncommon	12k (fighter pilots) 20m (others)	Roll for 1, 2 upon reaching 12k (fighter pilots) and after each additional k or set of kills, or upon reaching 20m and after every 5m more (others)
Military Merit Cross in Gold (Prussian)*	Enlisted, All Germans	Bravery	Uncommon (69)	15k (fighter pilots) 12m/5k (others)	For outstanding accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2
Ordon Pour le Merite (Prussian)*	Officers, All Germans	Service	Uncommon	20k and Knight's Cross Hohenzollern	Roll for 1,2 upon reaching 20k and after each additional kill or set of kills; roll 1 after every additional mission to actually take possession of it
Cross of a Holder with Swords to the Royal House Order of Hohenzollern (Prussian)*	Enlisted, All Germans	Service	Very Rare (10)	20k (fighter pilots) 36m (others)	Roll for 1,2 upon reaching 20k (fighter pilots) or 36m (others) and after every 3k or 6m
Military Merit Order With Swords (Bavarian)	Officers, Bavarian	Service	Common	12m/5k	Roll for 1,2 upon reaching 12m/5k and after each additional 2m/1k
Military Merit Cross (Bavarian)	Enlisted, Bavarian	Service	Common	12m/5k	Roll for 1,2 upon reaching 12m/5k and after each additional 2m/1k
Silver Bravery Medal (Bavarian)	Enlisted, Bavarian	Bravery	Very Rare (9)	Military Merit Cross	For outstanding accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2
Gold Bravery Medal (Bavarian)	Enlisted, Bavarian	Bravery	Extremely Rare (4)	Military Merit Cross	Only for the most outstanding accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2. If not awarded, roll 1,2 for Silver Bravery Medal instead.
Knight's Cross of the Military Order of Max Joseph (Bavarian)	Officers, Bavarian	Service	Very Rare (11)	20k	For outstanding service; upon reaching 20k after every additional 2k roll 1,2. This award bestows nobility and the right to use "Ritter" and "von" with the name.
Albert Order (Saxon)	Officers, Saxon	Service	Common	12m/5k	Roll for 1,2 upon reaching 12m/5k and after each additional 2m/1k
Merit Order (Saxon)	Officers, Saxon	Service	Uncommon	24m/10k	Roll for 1,2 upon reaching 24m/10k and after each additional 2m/1k
Silver Medal of the Order (Saxon)	Enlisted, Saxon	Bravery	Uncommon	6m	For suitable accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2
Gold Medal of the Order (Saxon)	Enlisted, Saxon	Bravery	Extremely Rare (3)	Silver Medal of the Order	Only for the most outstanding accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2
Military Order of St. Heinrich (Saxon)	Officers, Saxon	Service	Uncommon (105)	20k	For outstanding service; upon reaching 20k, and after every additional 2k, roll 1,2
Military Merit Order (Wurttemberg)	Officers, Wurttemberg	Service	Common (184)	12m/5k	Roll for 1,2 upon reaching 12m/5k and after each additional 2m/1k
Friedrich Order (Wurttemberg)	Officers, Wurttemberg	Service	Uncommon	24m/10k	Roll for 1,2 upon reaching 12m/5k and after each additional 2m/1k
Order of the Wurttemberg Crown with Swords (Wurttemberg)	Officers, Wurttemberg	Service	Rare	20k	For outstanding service; upon reaching 20k and after every additional 2k, roll 1,2
Silver Military Medal (Wurttemberg)	Enlisted, Wurttemberg	Bravery	Uncommon	6m	For suitable accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2
Gold Military Medal (Wurttemberg)	Officers and Enlisted, Wurttemberg	Bravery	Uncommon (213)	6m	For outstanding accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2
"Extra" Awards (Other German States)	Officers, All Germans	Service	Uncommon	Knight's Cross Hohenzollern	After winning the Knight's Cross of the Royal House Order of Hohenzollern, German officers can roll for a 1 after every additional 2k. If successful, roll again on subtable.

***These Prussian Awards are never given posthumously or to POW's.**

immediately while another must achieve a higher score before finally being recognized. This is reflected in the game by making awards dependent on a die roll as well as pilot eligibility.

Awards are listed by nationality, with notes on how they can be won. The list is not totally exhaustive, since there were many lesser awards that were too obscure or infrequently given to be included. Likewise, medals which went to most pilots as a matter of course (such as the German Iron Crosses 1st and 2nd Class) are not included, *as it is assumed pilots have received them already.*

Awards for bravery are given in three categories:

A) For a suitable accomplishment or act of bravery;
B) For an outstanding accomplishment or act of bravery;
C) For the most outstanding accomplishment or act of extreme bravery.

Granting these awards involves some subjective judgements. After a game in which a player feels his pilot qualified for consideration, that player or his wingmen should make a formal appeal for the award (assuming the pilot meets all experience prerequisites for the commendation). This proposal is discussed by all players present.

Category A awards could be given to a pilot who scored an important double kill, who scored a confirmed kill over an enemy ace of at lest 36M/15K, who drove away a larger force of enemy planes, or who saved the life of an experienced wingman, and so on. If all friendly wingmen present agree the flyer deserves the award, a roll is made at the appropriate time.

(continued on next page)

	Eligibility	*Type*	*Appearance*	*Prerequisites*	*Criteria*
British					
Military Cross (M.C.)	Officers, RFC (1917 only)	Bravery	Common	12m/5k	For suitable accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2,3,4
Military Cross (M.M.)	Enlisted, RFC or RNAS (1917 only)	Bravery	Common	12m/5k	For suitable accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2,3,4
Distinguished Service Cross (D.S.C.)	Officers, RNAS (1917 only)	Bravery	Common	12m/5k	For suitable accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2,3,4
Distinguished Flying Cross (D.F.C.)	Officers, RAF (1918)	Bravery	Common	12m/5k	For suitable accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2,3,4
Distinguished Flying Medal (D.F.M.)	Enlisted, RAF (1918)	Bravery	Common	12m/5k	For suitable accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2,3,4
Distinguished Service Order (D.S.O.)	Officers	Bravery	Uncommon	Either M.C., D.S.C. or D.F.C.	For outstanding accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2
Distinguished Conduct Medal (D.C.M.)	Enlisted, RFC (1917 only)	Bravery	Uncommon	M.M.	For outstanding accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2
Distinguished Service Medal (D.S.M.)	Enlisted, RNAS (1917 only)	Bravery	Uncommon	M.M.	For outstanding accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2
Victoria Cross (V.C.)	All	Bravery	Rare	12m	Only for the most outstanding accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1 (Roll 1,2 if ace with over 25k)
French					
Croix de Guerre (C. de G.)	All	Service	Common	10m/4k	Roll 1,2 upon reaching 10m/4k and after each additional 2m/1k
Medaille Militaire (M.M.)	All	Bravery	Common	16m	For suitable accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2,3
Legion d'Honneur (L. d'H.)	All	Bravery	Uncommon	M.M.	For outstanding accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2,3
American					
Distinguished Service Cross (D.S.C.)	All	Service	Common	12m/5k	Roll for 1,2 upon reaching 12m/5k and after each additional 2m/1k
Congressional Medal of Honor (C.M.H.)	All	Bravery	Extremely Rare (4)	6m	Only for most outstanding accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2
French Croix de Guerre (C. de G.)	All	Service	Common	10m/4k	Roll for 1 upon reaching 10/4k and after each additional 2m/1k
French Legion d'Honneur (L. d'H.)	All	Bravery	Uncommon	C. de G.	For outstanding accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2,3
Austro-Hungarian					
Military Merit Cross	All	Service	Common	12m/5k	Roll 1,2 upon reaching 12m/5k and after each additional 2m/1k
Bronze/Silver/Gold Medal for Bravery	All	Bravery	Uncommon (can be won multiple times)	6m	For suitable accomplishment or act of bravery, awarded by grade; select grade appropriate and roll: Bronze 1,2,3,4; Silver 1,2,3; Gold 1,2 — try next lower grade once if unsuccessful
Belgian					
Croix de Guerre	All	Service	Uncommon	10m/4k	Roll for 1,2 upon reaching 10m/4k and after each additional 2m/1k
Order of Leopold	All	Bravery	Uncommon	6m	For suitable accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2,3
Italian					
Silver Medal of Military Valor	All	Bravery	Common	6m	For suitable accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2
Gold Medal of Military Valor	All	Bravery	Uncommon	6m	For outstanding accomplishment or act of bravery; Roll 1,2. If not awarded, Roll 1,2 for Silver Medal instead.

"Extra" Awards Subtable

Roll two dice; if an award already received comes up again, or an award of the pilot's own nationality is indicated, no extra award is received.

2	War Merit Cross (Lippe)
3	War Merit Cross (Brunswick)
4	Merit Cross with Swords (Waldeck)
5	Order of the Lion of Zahringen (Baden)
6	Albert Order (Saxony)
7	Hanseatic Cross (Roll: 1, 2 Hamburg; 3, 4 Lubeck; 5, 6 Bremen)
8	Military Merit Order with Swords (Bavaria)
9	Friedrich Order (Wurttemberg)
10	Friedrich August Cross (Oldenburg)
11	Cross For Faithful Service (Schaumburg-Lippe)
12	Friedrich Cross (Anhalt)

Category B awards might be presented for scoring a triple kill, rescuing a wingman downed behind enemy lines, or acting as flight leader for an unusually successful mission where damage to the enemy was severe while friendly losses were minimal, and so on. If all friendly wingmen present agree, and no more than one opposing player dissents, a roll is made at the appropriate time.

Category C awards are for only the most outstanding events, the kind a player may see once in 500 games. Such a proposal must have the approval of all friendly wingmen, may be opposed by no more than one enemy player, and must be presented (if at all possible) to two other players who were not at the game in question. If they agree, the roll is made the next time the group gets together.

Generally, rolls for awards should be made immediately following the game in which a pilot becomes eligible (except for category C awards, as mentioned above). All rolls for awards must be announced by the eligible player before the die is rolled, and should be witnessed by at least three other players.

When an additional chance to win a service award is indicated, the eligible pilot continues to check only the category (either missions or kills) he first became eligible in. When checks for each additional kill are indicated, a double or triple kill allows only one additional check, not two or three. Once an award is received, no further checks for it are made.

Note that Prussian awards are never given posthumously or to POWs. Awards can be given to captured or killed flyers of other nationalities, when appropriate.

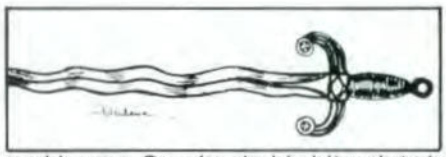
The German Orden Pour le Merite often was announced only to have the actual award delayed. A number of the awards were never presented at all, due to the war's end. This is reflected by requiring a second roll to actually receive the medal. There will be some disappointments!

TURNBULL TALKING #2

This time let's look at a topic which is perhaps a bit more controversial — the delicate matter of hit points.

You know, in its attempt to be fairly simple with the language it uses, the D&D game system is sometimes its own worst enemy, and this is a good example. The word "hit" is, after all, clear enough and needs no explanation any more than does the "to hit" die roll in D&D combat. A hit simply means you have inflicted a wound and you simply roll the appropriate die to find out how severe that wound is. A strong creature is capable of soaking up more wounds than a weak creature because of the way its body is built. A 10th level fighter can soak up more damage than he could when he was 1st level because....

Yes, we've hit a snag. He is, after all, the same bloke at 10th level as he was at 1st — he hasn't grown new, stronger skin



and bones. So why do his hit points increase? Without a good answer to this, the whole business of character progression becomes artificial or worse.

The conclusion — hits don't mean "wounds" in the straightforward sense — leads into rather murky and abstract waters. What seems to fit the facts is to equate hit points with a sort of generalised "capacity for living", so the 10th level fighter has a larger number of hit points than his 1st level counterpart because of his additional training and experience, not because his constitution has mysteriously increased.

This could have been handled in another way. Let the number of a character's hit points stay the same but reduce the damage inflicted by a weapon by an amount depending on the victim's experience level. These methods would produce much the same results (though the proper system allows the faint possibility that a mere orc, with an incredible string of luck, could eventually dispose of a 10th level fighter, whereas these suggested methods would remove that faint possibility altogether). But the bookkeeping would be much more detailed, and in any case these methods are almost certainly even more contrived and abstract.

So a hit on an opponent really means that the opponent's capacity for living has been significantly reduced. Conversely a "miss" means that the opponent's capacity for living has NOT been significantly reduced, though it does not necessarily miss in the sheer physical sense ("just a scratch, lad, just a scratch"). An abstraction, of course. But then the D&D system has never pretended to simulate melee — combat is simply one small part of the adventure, and it is with the overall adventure (and the players' enjoyment of it) that the games are concerned. In the context, the creation of this abstraction verges on the genius level. It allows the adventure to proceed without getting the players over-preoccupied with just one aspect.

While the word "hit" seems a bit misleading, it's just as well it is used, given the alternative. "Capacity-for-living" points and a "to-significantly-reduce-capacity-for-living" roll may be more accurate, semantically speaking, but there the improvement grinds to a halt.

Of course, this is all my interpretation, not necessarily the one the designer intended. The question is — am I right?

FIGURE PAINTING

by Michael W. Brunton

Michael Brunton is arguably Britain's leading 25mm fantasy figure painter. In this series of articles, originally printed in the D&D™ Players Association News (our counterpart in the UK), he gives advice and vital tips on how to paint successfully.

Many of the companies and terms mentioned herein are distinctively British; a translation note is included at the end of the article.

OK. So now you have a boxful of Grenadier figures. Now what? This, hopefully, is what this series of articles will be about: How to Paint D&D Figures and Paint Them Properly. This said, I should begin this article with a get-out clause (for me): whatever I say should only be taken as advisory. I am of the opinion that the only way you can paint figures well is to evolve your own style, with hints and tips from others, but nevertheless YOUR own style.

The most important single thing for painting D&D figures is imagination — which, after all, you must have, otherwise why are you playing D&D games and reading this? It's imagination, not historical accuracy, that determines the finished product, and also provides variety. If slavish accuracy should not exist in fantasy, then a sense of realism should. This may sound strange, but a couple of reference books are quite useful. You don't have to be 100% realistic, but it does help to know what a suit of armour looks like, or what colours a horse is.

You may well know a lot of what I am going to say in this series; in that case, stick with it until you (maybe) find out something new or something to disagree with. Anyway, to business; setting up and preparation.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The place where you work on your figures seems to be something which is given very little consideration. Wherever you do choose to work there are some simple guidelines to follow:

1. Make sure that wherever you work, it is as dust-free as possible.
2. Try to choose somewhere that is well-ventilated. A number of glues and paint thinners give off heavy fumes which can be very dangerous if continuously inhaled. For the same reason, don't smoke while you are painting; the fumes are inflammable, and some turn poisonous when they burn.
3. Choose somewhere that is well-lit. Natural daylight is best, but if you only get a chance to paint in the evening, this isn't a great deal of use. In that case, try to get an even spread of light across the work area.
4. Get some kind of workboard. This is a simple piece of self-preservation. Wives and mothers do not take kindly to having bits of furniture cut into with little knives or splattered with paint.

TOOLS AND ADHESIVES

The tools that you need to paint D&D figures are really very simple and few in number. Most of these tools are used to clean up the figures before painting and removing mould lines, flash, and the like.

The most important tool of all is a good craft knife. Don't use an old razorblade, or buy a knife with a set of snapoff blades stored in the handle. Preferably, the knife you use should have a metal handle and accept a good range of interchangeable blades. A word of warning — always use a knife in a safe direction, i.e., away from you. Otherwise, if a blade snaps or slips, you could end up minus several finger ends.

You might also find a set of small files useful, in flat, round, half-round, triangular and square cross sections. Some "wet and dry" paper is very useful, instead of, or in addition to, a set of files. Incidentally, emery boards make a reasonable substitute and are quite good in themselves.

As far as adhesives are concerned, the best for our purposes, either for assembling figures or for mounting finished figures on stands, is one of the cyanoacrylate types — one of the so-called "super glues". After some experimentation, I settled on UHU Supalok as the best product. It gives a fast bond and, (a major point in its favour) is well packed in a childproof tube. These glues really are dangerous when used incorrectly, and should always be treated with the greatest respect — flesh bonds just as readily as metal. Whatever else you do, follow the manufacturer's instructions to the letter.

The other things that I have found useful for painting fantasy figures are a bit of an odd selection: Blu-Tak, Milliput Epoxy Putty, and Tetrion. Blu-Tak is a very useful product for holding figures together during assembly or for tacking them to some kind of handle during painting, so that the figure isn't touched until finished and varnished. Milliput Epoxy Putty is a two-part modelling clay which, when mixed, sets hard after about two hours or so. Its uses include filling holes and cracks caused by moulding defects, and modifying figures by adding extra equipment and the like. Milliput, like Tetrion, can be used to good effect to create groundwork on bases of finished figures.

BRUSHES

There is only one sort of brush worth bothering with for figure painting — pure sable artists' watercolour brushes. Although as a single item they are very expensive, they will give excellent service for months or years if carefully looked after. These brushes may cost seven or eight times as much as a "hobby" brush of the same size, but the extra quality, fineness of point, and degree of control over where the paint is going is vital when painting something as small as a D&D figure.

The best place to buy a good sable brush is at specialist art suppliers. When you do buy a brush, make sure that it has a good point. If necessary, lick the hairs and form the tip — gently — with your fingers. If the brush doesn't come to a good sharp single point, put it back and

try another. Make sure the brush you have chosen is of a useful size: a Size 0 or 00 sable might seem a better buy for small work on figures than a Size 1 or 2, but it isn't really. A Size 1 or 2 will produce as fine a point as a Size 0 or 00, and will also hold a good deal more paint, which is an important consideration. I should also add that all of the D&D figures that I have painted have been done using a Size 2 sable brush or larger.

Brushes will, as I mentioned previously, last longer and give better service if they are treated properly. Looking after brushes is more than just cleaning them properly; it also means using them properly:

1. Always wipe the brushes from root to tip, so that the point is maintained. Never wipe a brush from tip to root or push brushes into paint; there is no faster way of damaging them beyond repair.
2. Never stir paint in pots with brushes (hair OR handle) or mix paint on the palette with a brush. For both tasks, something like a wooden cocktail stick is far better.
3. Try not to allow pigment to get up the hairs as far as the roots. Once any paint has got into the ferrule, it is extremely difficult to remove, and will eventually spread the hairs, thus ruining the brush's point. Ideally only the lower half of the hairs, from the point, should come into contact with paint. Buying a larger brush will ensure that there is enough paint present, even with only "half" a brushload to do the job in hand. Once the paint does get into the ferrule and the point goes, put the brush aside.
4. Never leave brushes standing in thinners during a painting session. For that matter, never leave brushes resting on their hairs at all, unless you like painting around corners.
5. Always clean brushes after a painting session with the correct thinners for the type of paint that you have been using. Wipe the brush clean of thinners, and then wash it gently in a weak solution of washing-up liquid. Rinse the brush in cold water, and wipe off the excess water. Gently reform the point of the brush.
6. Always store brushes so that the hairs are not damaged. Preferably, a brush should be stored vertically, in a jar or something similar. Always store them handles downwards, and make sure that the hairs are not leaning against the side of the jar. It's a good idea to get some neoprene tubing (used by aeromodelers as fuel piping) long enough to cover the ferrule,as it provides excellent protection. Some are, in fact, sold with tubing for just this purpose — so don't throw it away as packaging.

UNDERCOAT

Undercoating figures is an important part of the job which is too often ignored. The type of undercoat and its application can have a profound, and sometimes unfortunate, effect on the finished product. An undercoat has two important functions; it seals off the metal, and provides a good surface for the paint to "key" into. Furthermore, some interesting effects can be obtained by staining the undercoat with thin washes of colour.

For D&D figures, the best undercoat is a good quality matt white paint. Humbrol matt white enamel or Hinchliffe Models Ltd's Hobby Spray Undercoat both provide good coverage. I use Rose Miniatures' white, a water soluble paint, which I have found gives a good surface for oil paints. Whatever undercoat you use, always apply it as several thin coats rather than as a single thick one. A single coat tends to mask a great deal of detail on the figure.

VARNISH

Varnish is really necessary to stop all your hard work being rubbed off by assorted grubby fingers. Think how much handling a D&D figure gets during a game and you'll see what I mean.

Almost any good quality varnish will do, as long as it is matt — gloss varnish reduces any model to the stature of a toy. Hinchliffe Models Ltd market a matt varnish spray which, I am told, is quite good. At present I use Frisk matt lacquer spray, which is sold as "Frisk Lac Matt".

It is a quick-drying protective spray for artwork which is specifically manufactured to protect from finger prints, abrasion, smudging, and general handling.

Like an undercoat, varnish is best applied in several thin coats rather than as a single thick gunge.

PAINTS

When it comes to the type of paint that you use, this will depend largely on your own personal preference. Whether you choose to stick to one type of paint or mix several different ones is of little consequence. What really matters is for you to arrive at a technique that suits you. When painting D&D figures these days I use Artists' Oil paints with some Rose watercolours and metallics and Humbrol metallics. Whatever paints you do choose, always be prepared to experiment with others to achieve different effects (when you reach sufficient proficiency).

Remember never to paint a model with gloss paint, for this will instantly reduce it to the status of a toy. These figures are not toys in any sense of the word. The only areas where gloss paint is reasonable is on such items as metal work or polished leather and, even then, careful shading is far more appropriate than high gloss.

Enamels: Enamel paints are probably the best type for any complete beginner. Not only are they fast-drying, but they are also produced in many convenient shades. Enamels are widely distributed by craft and model retailers. The easiest ranges to obtain are Humbrol and Airfix, and of these the Humbrol Authentics range is best for our purposes, with some very useful colours in the Ancient Uniforms and Ceremonial Uniforms ranges. Humbrol Metallic colours are also the best available for our purposes, whatever other sorts of paint you use.

It is very important to keep the tins tightly closed at all times, and make sure that the lids do not become clogged up with pigment, otherwise the paint will not remain in prime condition. If you do ever find a skin on the paint, throw it away. The tins are relatively cheap, and once they start drying out they are useless and will give a crude, grainy texture to your painting.

As far as thinning these paints down and cleaning brushes when using enamels are concerned, Humbrol produces Thinners and Brush Cleaner, but it isn't really necessary to buy these specialised products, as white spirit works just as well.

Acrylics: These are the paints that Grenadier Models now includes in two sets of their figures. Acrylic paints are water soluble, based on a synthetic resin. They have many of the properties of oil paints, along with some of those of watercolours. Acrylic paints dry extremely rapidly, which makes them very attractive for figure painting. Apart from the acrylics in the Grenadier set, those manufactured by George Rowney & Co. Ltd. are the best. Rowney Flow Formula Cryla can be used directly from the tube as with oil paints, or thinned down with water. Flow Formula Cryla dries with a slight sheen, but like other acrylics can be mixed with casein-based watercolours, which dry completely matt.

Watercolours: Artists' watercolours. as such, aren't a great deal of use in painting D&D figures, except as thin washes for shading purposes. There are, however, some casein-based watercolours which are quite usable on 25mm figures. Pelikan Plaka paints are produced for artists and graphic designers. Rose paints are specifically manufactured for military miniatures by Rose Miniatures, 15 Llanover Road, Plumstead, London SE18 3ST. Rose also produces gold powder in shades (Pale Gold, Rich Gold, and Antique Gold), which is applied with a special turpentine-soluble medium. The powders can also be mixed with most sorts of paint. All casein-based watercolours are intermixable with acrylics, and dry just as quickly.

Oil Paints: Oil paints are not generally considered suitable for work on 25mm figures. My choice of this medium is therefore a little odd, and quite frankly, not a choice I would recommend to anyone without experience. However, if you do try oils and stick with them (even if the first few figures seem terrible), the sheer beauty of oil paint as a medium will make you a convert.

If you decide that oil paints are for you, then the best types to buy are artists' quality paints, as these have finer ground pigments and better quality ingredients than the students' oil paints sold by some companies. Both Winsor & Newton and Rowney make very good oil paints. If the slow drying times of oils puts you off (typically a few days, although figures can be worked on almost immediately), then Winsor & Newton Alkyd colours might be worth considering. Alkyd colours are based on a synthetic resin, and are in all respects the same as standard oil paints except that they dry in around 45 minutes. Oil paints are completely intermixable with Humbrol enamels.

Whatever paints you do decide to use, remember that it is not always economical to buy large tubes or tins of paint. Although these seem good values, only a small amount of paint is used on a D&D figure, and a large quantity may very well dry out before it is used.

The choice of a mixing palette is very much up to you. For white spirit or turpentine soluble paints, a vegetable paper palette is more than adequate. They are sold in tearoff pads of about 50 or so, and those made by Daler and Rowney are equally good. For water-soluble paints, a plastic sheet does nicely. Cling film (Saran wrap) makes an easily disposable mixing palette when stretched across a flat surface. You can, of course, buy purpose made plastic or porcelain paint palettes — if you do, however, make sure that they are completely clean at the end of a painting session.

That, then, is it on setting up and preparation. In the next article I shall cover the real meat of the series — painting human and humanoid-type figures. I shall assume that you are using enamels or acrylics. The basic principles of painting are essentially the *same* no matter what paint is used, although techniques do vary slightly.

UK Product		American equivalent
Airfix	=	Floquil
Blu-tak	=	Funtak
Frisk Lac Matt	=	Testor's Dullcote or Glosscote
Hinchliffe Models Ltd Hobby Spray Undercoat	=	Floquil gray primer, followed by white
Hinchliffe matt varnish spray	=	Pactra's clear flat
Humbrol matt white enamel	=	Pactra's spray white
Milliput Epoxy Putty	=	Borden's Epoxy Putty
Pelikan Plaka	=	same in USA or use Polly-S
Rowney Flow Formula Cryla	=	Grumbacher Acrylics
Tetrion	=	Elmer's White Glue
UHU Supalok	=	Eastman 910 glue
vegetable paper palette	=	waxed paper
Windsor & Newton Oils	=	Grumbacher oils

CONVENTION WRAPUP 1981

It was a wild summer. We premiered with a new tournament system at the GEN CON™ East gathering, and repeated it at the Big One in August; many happy gamers won RPGA modules, memberships, and many other prizes. One lucky winner got a free trip to Wisconsin (and wrote us all about it; see Marnie's article elsewhere in this issue).

Here's a summary of the Big Two:

GEN CON EAST	Cherry Hill Inn
game	Cherry Hill, NJ
convention	July 21-24, 1981

TSR sent quite a few people to East, including Ernie Gygax, Jim Ward, Allen Hammack (C2 author), Harold Johnson (C1 author), DRAGON publisher "Jake" Jaquet, Gen Con Coordinator Skip Williams, and RPGA Staff members Bill Hoyer and Frank Mentzer. TOP SECRET author Merle Rasmussen, though not a TSR employee, came along with us, riding the long miles past the Great Lakes to the Philadelphia area.

The Cherry Hill Inn was a beautiful site, big enough for all the games and most of the gamers. Prices were high, but that's normal for conventions in hotels. The Carroll family, headed by Shawn Carroll, the GEN CON East Coordinator, organized everything and kept it moving throughout the weekend.

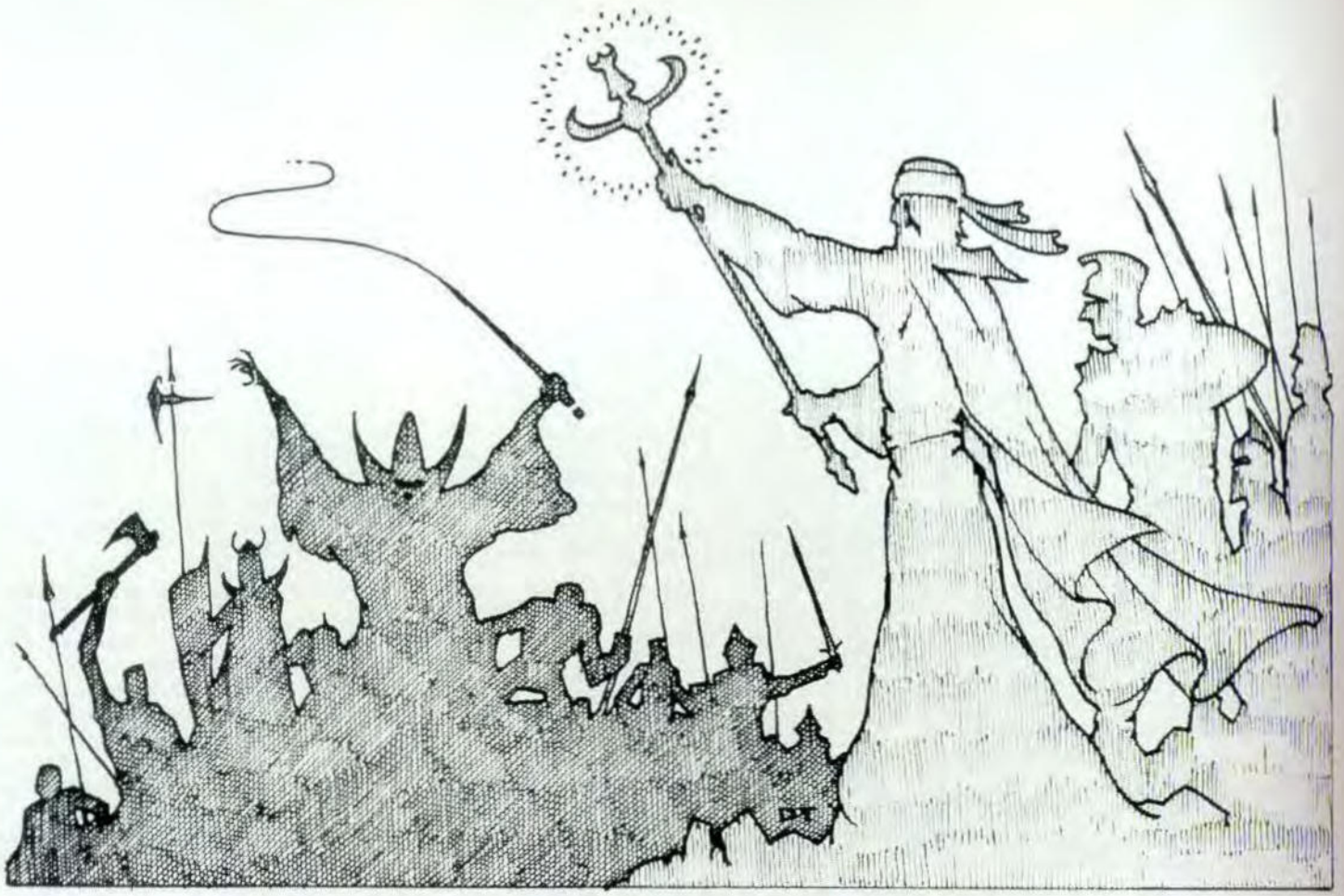
The first Official RPGA AD&D Tournament was held there, using "The Investigation of Hydell" as rounds 1 and 2 (now module R-2) and "To the Aid of Falx" (R-1, first seen at the GEN CON South game convention in February) as the final round.

A majority of the players progressed to the semifinal and final rounds; the system allowed more players to advance than in most role playing tournaments. The tension grew steadily as Sunday afternoon came around, when the weary finalists displayed some of the best AD&D talent ever seen, competing for a free trip to the birthplace of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game. (If you've never been to a game convention, believe me: you're always weary on Sunday!)

Three teams of six players each were in the final round, playing for game masters Frank Mentzer, Bill Hoyer, and guest DM Bill Fawcett. Each of the other DMs received a one-year membership extension for each round they ran, and they deserve a special thanks:

Eric Boyle	Phila, PA
Harry Burke	Darien, CT
Tim Cahoon	Lake Geneva, WI
George Johnson	Lake Hiawatha, NJ
Harold Johnson	Lake Geneva, WI
Ken Ralston	Tabor, NJ
Bob Stiegel	Alexandria, VA
Jim Ward	Elkhorn, WI

And an honorable mention to Allen Hammack, who was unexpectedly dragged out of bed to DM Sunday morning, but who was not needed (as it turned out).



GEN CON staff members calm some angry preregistrants on Thursday morning.

The top two players on each team received copies of the modules used. Each finalist received a one-year membership extension, and they were:

David M. Axler *	Philadelphia, PA
Noel J. Bergman	Elkins Park, PA
Marnie Bosch *	Trumbull, CT
Bart Dibble	Westfield, NY
Steven Grover	Norwich, CT
Valerie Grover *	Norwich, CT
A. Christopher Hall	Marlborough, MA
Michael Klein	Fargo, ND
Gordon Landis	Old Greenwich, CT
Herb Lattin	Stratford, CT
Dave Lichauco	Pleasant Valley, NY
Neil Maruca	Manville, NY
Rembert Parker	Knoxville, TN
Carl F. Plossl	Philadelphia, PA
Robert Smith	Westfield, NY
Robert Taggart	Mountainview, HI
Meryl Yourish	Hillside, NJ

(Denotes best on team)*

When all was said and done, the DMs gathered together for a thorough analysis to find the best player. The names and genders were left out, and by comparing game knowledge, quality of role playing, and cooperation, the top winner was decided on: Bill Fawcett's halfling fighter/thief player. This turned out to be Marnie Bosch, who lost her membership extensions but gained a free trip to the GEN CON XIV game convention in Parkside, Wisconsin. And when the winners were announced at the awards ceremony, the crowd went wild.

And so it went; the TSR crew piled into the vans Sunday night and went home to prepare for the Big One.

GEN CON XIV	U. W. Parkside
game	Kenosha, Wisconsin
convention	August 13-16, 1981

This, the biggest and best game con of all, was truly an experience — as it is every year. Frantic preparations and a flurry of last-minute activities marked the early weeks of August, and a major change in setup (moving the dealers' area to the specially-carpeted gymnasium) kept everyone busier than usual. Everyone was typically overloaded Wednesday night, making final preparations into the wee hours. Thursday arrived right after Wednesday, despite repeated attempts to delay it, and with Thursday came the morning registration of Day One.

The Parkside Area Wargamers (PAW) were once again the official hosts for the event, along with TSR Hobbies, Inc. Their experience and diligence have, time and time again, been essential in making the convention the success that it is; a special thanks to Terry Rasmussen and Patti Craig, and all the gofers, movers, aides, coordinators, security people, and others involved.

The RPGA booth was located right next to the convention registration area, and gained much thereby. Dozens of new members purchased pre-publication copies of the new RPGA modules, and the figure cases were very popular among new and old members alike. D&D T-shirts were also sold by the RPGA staff to help raise money for the network, but did not go as well as the RPGA materials.

The RPGA AD&D Tournament was well attended, and there were DMs to spare, resulting in (again) a large proportion of players advancing into the later rounds. Frank wrote the modules for the tournament, as at East. The two-part module used for the opening and semifinal rounds was the epic "The Egg of the Phoenix," featuring Rusty the rust monster and a cast of thousands (of undead), soon available as module R-3.

The final round was tense. Ten teams of five players went through the difficult "Doc's Island" scenario (R-4), a search for a Holy Sword and sequel to R-3; many characters died trying. Survival was not the basis for the awards, though; the quality of the game was what counted, and a standard of amazingly good play was shown by most groups. The best players on each team (who each received a DRAGON subscription, a one year membership extension, and copies of the modules used) were:

Bob Atchison	Elm Grove, WI
Marnie Bosch	Trumbull, CT
Jeff Dobberpuhl	Aberdeen, SD
Penny Feustel	Milwaukee, WI
Francis Fleming	N. Little Rock, AR
Peter Hurst	Lake Forest, IL
Jeff Keeney	Mt. Hope, WI
Terrill Rogers	Colorado Springs, CO
Mike Sutton	Oakville, Ontario
James Thorpe	Melbourne, FL

The DM conference after the Final was the toughest part for the DMs. Over an hour of intense discussion led to the final decision; most of the classes were represented, and a tight range of highquality play made the decision a tough one. All the winners were announced at the awards ceremony late Sunday, and the one top winner (receiving a total of five years' membership, Mattel Electronics® DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™ Computer Labyrinth Game, a series of 20 pewter figures donated by member Bob Waldbauer, all the modules used, and a DRAGON subscription) was:

James W. Thorpe

Each member of the best team, which turned out to be Mr. Thorpe's, also received copies of the modules used, a one-year membership extension, and a wizard figure from Bob Waldbauer.

All the other players in the final round won one-year membership extensions, and they were:

Joseph Adlesick	Chicago, IL
Richard Bingle	Naperville, IL
Martin Carter	Selkirk, Manitoba
Michael A. Chance	Scott AFB, IL
Bryan Conry	Kansas City, MO
A. L. Court	W. Palm Beach, FL
Patrick Desmond	Chicago, IL
Eric Doubell	Hudson, OH
Don Dumitru	Cocoa Beach, FL
Duane Fridley	New Albany, IN

(continued on next page)

Ed Greenwood	Willowdale, Ontario
Ron Gregory	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Jeff Griggs	Evansville, IN
Fred Hommel	Framingham, MA
Phil Houghton	Ste. Foy, Quebec
Paul Hurst	Lake Forest, IL
Paul Jesernig	Bolingbrook, IL
Reynold C. Jones	Petersburg, NY
Nick Kielhold	Aberdeen, SD
Patrick Mahon	Cleveland, OH
Bob Mason	Kokomo, IN
Malcolm Maynard	Delta, B. Columbia
Todd McIntyre	Malvern, PA
Martin D. Miller	Jeffersonville, IN
Ed Milmore	Largo, FL
Joe Nochman	Huntington Woods, MI
George Pratt	Carmel, IN
W. A. Reuter	Lake Geneva, WI
Gregory Rihn	Lancaster, WI
Joe Roberti	Lake Forest, IL
Matthew Rupp	Auburn, FL
Charles Sagui	Boaz, KY
Clyde Scott	Little Rock, AR
Paul Soik	Whitefish Bay, WI
H. J. Soulatzkoff	Winnipeg, Manitoba
David Wall	Lamirada, CA
Todd Warnken	Cincinnati, OH
J. W. Wilson, Jr.	Indianapolis, IN
Neil Wyrchowny	Stonewall, Manitoba
Rex Zinn	Hobart, IN

RPGA Assistant Coordinator Bill Hoyer coordinated the setup of the whole tournament, anticipating the size and requirements so well that we had plenty of top-quality DMs for all sessions. The Chicago Wargamers Association (CWA) was of invaluable help in providing and locating local DMs, and we give them our thanks and best wishes. Bill also deserves special thanks, as do the DMs themselves, who earned a one-year membership extension for each round run:

Rob Auer	Elm Grove, WI
Mark Baltazar	Chicago, IL
Kevin Clark	Macoutah, IL
Dave Danner	Brookfield, WI
John Danovich	Dexter, MI
Scott Dollinger	De Kalb, IL
Eric Eklund	Moorhead, MN
Tim Everett	Terre Haute, IN
Peter Farrow	Elm Grove, WI
Jason Gralewicz	Madison, WI
Brad Johnson	River Forest, IL
Garner Johnson	River Forest, IL
Doug Jones	Dixon, IL
Paul Karczag	Evanston, IL
Les Kay	Chicago, IL
Dan Keller	Richmond, MO
Sue Khas	Chicago, IL
Michael Klein	Fargo, ND
Corey Koebernick	Lake Geneva, WI
Tim Kuring	Eastman, WI
Randy Pacetti	Downers Grove, IL
Penny Petticord	Akron, OH
Jon Pickens	Lake Geneva, WI
Brian Price	Greendale, WI
Dale Rotheroe	Mt. Prospect, IL
Jim Selzer	Big Bend, WI
Geoffrey Shive	Chicago, IL
Eric Shook	Lake Geneva, WI
Edward G. Sollers	Lake Geneva, WI
Dale Staley	Mundelein, IL
Jerry Stefek	N. Riverside, IL
Jeff Weiss	Milwaukee, WI
Steve Zizzo	Melrose Park, IL

And a wonderful time was had by all. Sunday night I went home and collapsed.

Another convention season is fast approaching. We sincerely hope YOU can make it to one of them, at least; quality tournaments are one of the main concerns of the RPGA network. So whichever you attend — see you there!

GEN CON Coordinator Skip Williams supervises Sunday evening cleanup crews.

TOP SECRET™ GADGET CONTEST

by Merle Rasmussen

"What's taking SDD so long to deliver those telemetry tracking devices? This waiting has given me a headache!" growled Major K as he took two pills. "Why can't they deliver on time? Don't they know where I'm going today?"

"I'm afraid they do, sir," chortled Alpha. "You've just swallowed them."

Entries for the first annual TOP SECRET™ Gadget Contest, conducted and sponsored by the ROLE PLAYING GAME ASSOCIATION network, are now being accepted. The contest is divided into five categories:

C: Communications Gadgets
S: Surveillance Gadgets
A: Assassination Gadgets
V: Vehicular Gadgets
M: Miscellaneous Gadgets

An entry for competition in any category must be a small mechanical device. The Gadget may include chemical, nuclear, or electrical components but the operation and performance of the device must be dominated by physical forces. The Gadget by itself should be easily portable by one person but can be installed as an integral part of a larger structure, such as a vehicle or building.

Any entry may involve new materials and processes on the fringes of current technology, but should be believable and explainable. An illustration of the device is not necessary, but may enhance the written description. The inclusion or omission of any quality artwork will not influence the judging of the entry. All entries must be compatible with the TOP SECRET rules system and useable with the game.

The contestant is responsible for placing the entry in the category most appropriate to it. Each entry should contain ALL of the following details:

1. Category of the Gadget;
2. Name of the Gadget;
3. Amount of time it takes to construct a prototype in a fully equipped laboratory or workshop;
4. Cost of a prototype;
5. Estimated manufactured cost if it was produced in quantity;
6. How the Gadget works or how it is used;
7. The Gadget's effects;
8. Any other statistics or explanations to describe the device.

Example:

CATEGORY:	M (Misc. Gadgets)
NAME:	Glowing Duster (GD)
PROTO TIME:	168 hrs (1 week)
PROTO COST:	$ 3500
MFG. COST:	$ 175

HOW IT WORKS: The battery-powered light-sensitive device is activated when someone passes by, casting a shadow. When the GD is activated a small explosive charge is ignited, which immediately propels luminous white dust in a cylindrical cloud 5 meters in diameter, 2 meters in height or length.

HOW IT IS USED: The GD is placed by an agent in passageways where possibly hostile forces will pass. The GD should be placed opposite a light source which will cause a shadow to fall across the GD's sensor panel.

EFFECT: Anyone within 2.5 meters of the GD will be coated with the clinging white powder, which is not easily brushed off. Pursuing individuals will be easy to see in the dark; the report of the explosive may alarm the GD's installer; and the opaque cloud serves as a form of cover.

ADDED COMMENTARY: Placing the GD on the floor of the hallway in a clearly visible position will often frighten pursuers unsure of the device's actual purpose. A series of GDs along an escape route can provide an automatic smokescreen for fleeing agents triggering the devices as they run.

Each entry should be 250 words in length, or less. The length of the manuscript will not influence the judging of the entry. Entries will be judged on originality, believability, and applicability to the TOP SECRET game system. You may enter as many Gadgets as you like, but a Gadget may NOT be entered in more than one category.

All entries become the exclusive property of RPGA HQ, and may not be submitted elsewhere in the event that they are not published in the RPGA Newsletter. Each entry MUST be accompanied by a signed statement which assigns all publication rights to RPGA NEWS; otherwise the entry cannot be published if and when it wins. Entries without such a

statement will not be considered in the judging. No submissions will be returned, so keep a copy. Remember: write "I assign all publication rights to the RPGA Newsletter" on each entry.

PRIZES: The first prize winner in each category will receive a $10 RPGA credit, usable for a one-year membership extension or the equivalent in prizes from the RPGA Gift Catalog, including TS and AD&D modules not available elsewhere. The runner-up in each category will receive a $5 credit. Both winning entries in each category, first place and runner-up, will be published in the RPGA Newsletter.

HONORABLE MENTIONS: An unknown number of Honorable Mention Awards ("Q Awards") will be awarded to writers of entries not qualifying for prizes but, in the estimation of the judges, worthy of public recognition. The names of the authors will also be published in the Newsletter.

DEADLINE: All entries in all categories must be postmarked by March 1st, 1982. Entries should be sent by first-class mail to TOP SECRET GADGET CONTEST, c/o RPGA HQ, POB 509, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

CODEBOOK

Some members have jokingly asked for their "secret decoder rings" and other items common to clubs of the past. Well, sorry folks, but we won't be making those.

Cyphers and secret messages have been around for quite a while, though; the ancient romans used to wind a long strip of parchment around a staff, write the message lengthwise, and unroll it. This type of code was easily broken by trying sticks of different sizes until a message appeared. For long-term plans, the Greeks would write a message on the head of a slave, let him grow his hair for a bit, and send him out to be shorn of his curly locks by the waiting general far away.

"Cryptograms" are popular among today's puzzle solvers, and are a regular feature of most game and puzzle magazines. They all use simple substitution codes, where a certain symbol means the same letter or number throughout the message. Most codes of this type are fairly easy to decipher.

Some European code experts would send a meaningless message in a simple substitution code, using the code itself as the real message. Known as the "double reverse," the message can be read by decoding the "message" and then writing down the alphabet, noting the code underneath; the "code" spells out a doubly hidden message.

Codes can be used in role playing games either as puzzles for the players to solve or as a characters. We'll be giving you some tips on decoding substitution codes, as well as lots of messages to decode for your own amusement.

If we don't print the answer to a coded message, you can get the decoded version and the code used by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to "Codebook," c/o RPGA HQ. We will NOT send the answer if you don't enclose an envelope for our reply with the correct postage.

1. Tracing down a top secret message:

EUZRPU PWPIPNEL, GAYRA ZUP IYRUMLRMOYR OZUEYRWPL YNEUMQJRPQYNEM ZWYHYNSXMQC XC GZC MK KMMQ, ZUP JLPKJW YN EAZE EAPC ZWWMG EUZRVYNS MK ZLJLOPRE XC ZNCMNP BYEA EAP OUMOPU PDJYOIPNE. MNP OUMXW— PIYL EAZE LMOAYLEYRZEPQ EMMWL ZUP NPPQPQ KMU EUZRVYNS MHPU WZUSP QYLEZNRPL.

2. This desert creature gives you fits:

;48 (];5(: ;](,?8]I ;48 8*36*8]I ;48)].!6;4 -5980 -5?)8) 5 ;8*%8*-; I](6; ;] ;?(* (634; !48* I0:6*3 ;46) 56(-(5I; 6* 3598) (898928(;] 500]! *6*8;: %83(88 ;?(*) ;] ;48 (634; 6* ;48 -]?()8]I *](950 9]P898*; 5 -5.52606;:)45(8% 2: ;48)*6.8 5*% ;48 I]778(%( ]*8

3. Landing on a dangerous world:

RM GSV TZNNZ DLIOW TZNV, HLNV LU GSV NLHG WZMTVILFH ZIVZH ZIV GSV HKZXVKLIGHLU GSV ZMXRVMGH. GSVHV KOZXVH ZIV FHFZOOB SRTSOB IZWRLZXGREV YFG GSVB ZIV NLHGOB RMGZXG WFV GL GSVRI LFGHGZMWRMT HSRVOWRMT, ZMW ZIV LUGVM RMSZYRGVW YB WZMTVILFH ILYLGRX GBKVH ZMW HFIILFMWVW YB GSV DLIHG GBKVH LU NFGZMG XIVZGFIVH.

4. Fantastically hard to see:

FNWNCK RJC XRLQJRSSY NXTNKNPSC KEBJL EQIRXBNAK VNLE FBVCJOQS IRDNG RPNSNLNCK. LECY GRX ACOCXA LECNJ LCJJNLBJNCK VNLE DJCRL COONGNCXGY, RXA GRX PC R LBQDE PQL XCQLJRS BPKLRGSC NO LECY SNTC NX LEC FRLE BO R FRJLY BO BQLABBJ RATCXLQJCJK.

NOTES FROM HQ *Part 2*

Just a few things we've encountered this quarter:

CORRESPONDENCE: *Please* be sure to put your membership number on the *letter* you write to RPGA HQ, not just the envelope. We have to look up the number if you don't tell us, and that makes extra work — and we put the hard ones aside to do last. To get help fast, include your number.

The response to the newsletter has been great. Keep it up! But just one thing: we sort everything out when it arrives, and it *really helps* if you use postcards for suggestions, ideas, etc. — anything that just needs writing down (as opposed to an included check, bent pin, etc.). It's cheaper for you, and easier for us.

When you send in an order, idea, suggestion, or whatever, send it to the proper RPGA department, like "News" or "TS Contest." The mail gets sorted out by topic, and when more than one thing is in the same letter, they sometimes get filed away too soon — so we get your subscription out, but miss your neat idea for a trap, for example.

CREDIT CARDS: If your purchase is charged by someone else's plastic money, we need the name on the card as well as yours. NOTE that this applies to parents paying for things!

DRAGON MAGAZINE: If you wish to order DRAGON magazine subscriptions through the RPGA Gift Catalog (saving $4 from the normal price), please note: there is no discount due to mailings; that's $20, including the works.

MEMBERSHIPS: While you're looking over the gift catalog, remember that RPGA Memberships make great gifts, too, for birthdays and un-birthday presents. The same prices are good through this coming Gen Con convention (August), but may be going up a bit after that. So HURRY!

MODULES: Many members have ordered modules ahead of time, and we've got a minor problem thereby. You can't deduct the quarter from the postage for modules that don't come out until months later; that deduction applies ONLY when all the items ordered are mailed in one package. We can either hold your order — which you won't like, because everything will arrive much later — or we can reserve a copy for you, already paid for, and send it out when it gets back from the printer. "White Rabbits" in this issue has all the availability dates for the modules. If you ordered one and subtracted the postage, you'll probably get a note from us asking for the additional quarter or fifty cents, or whatever.

NEWSLETTER: Good news. The response to the newsletter has been so great that we're going from quarterly to bi-monthly.

MUTANTS:

A Continued Sampling Of The Weak Ones

"From the Chronicles of Random of the Many Names"

by James M. Ward

ANDROID UNIT:
The Trek Droid

POWER SOURCE:
Hydrogen Energy Cell
ARMOR CLASS: 7
MOVEMENT: 16
HIT DICE: (75 Hit Points with every unit)
15 dice for attacking purposes
AVERAGE SIZE: Variable with type

DROID SYSTEMS:

VARIABLE WITH TYPE OF UNIT
MOST COMMON SYSTEMS:
1.) Full humanoid appearance
2.) Full range of human senses (at maximum human capability)
3.) Equipment dependant on type

CONTROL SYSTEMS:

(Special programing at the time of creation or with change of ownership)

The Trek Droid was a response to a wave of interest in the past. With the increased ease of an android creation, it became a simple matter to create personality programs that resembled the imagined personality types of popular figures in the past. Those that wanted to have famous personalities as companions could do so through the acquisition of one of these androids. The most common duplicated personalities were as follows: JOON WAAAN, SAAMSUN, BETSEE RAS, BAUN FRANCLEN, TAOGA CHEZMOTOO, ZUUS, DAVY CROUCITT, TAU ZINUNSEM, CHURLEK HELMS, BEN HUR, AND MR. SPOK. These systems have survived surprisingly well after the time of the "ANCIENTS". If these units have their energy cells available, their systems will not wear out and they will have all of their capacities intact. They are almost always found in isolated areas of Gamma World and are usually more than willing to take up a new owner and aid them with all of their abilities. These are usually considerable depending on the personality programming of the unit. The Saamsun unit in particular has great strength built into its arm and leg units and can do a great deal of work.

TOREL PLANT "Mutated fungus"

APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 10
MOVEMENT: Nil
HIT DICE: 20
(Specie Average Hit Points: 120)
AVERAGE HEIGHT: 50 meters
MENTAL STRENGTH
(Specie Average): 3
INTELLIGENCE
(Specie Average): 3
DEXTERITY
(Specie Average): N/A
CHARISMA
(Specie Average): N/A
CONSTITUTION
(Specie Average): N/A
PHYSICAL STRENGTH
(Specie Average): N/A

MENTAL MUTATIONS PER SPECIE:

Telepathy
Total Healing
Repulsion Field
Force Field Generation

PHYSICAL MUTATIONS PER SPECIE:

Spore Shooting
Gas Generation

This vegetation appears as a giant morel mushroom that is light blue in color. There is also an equal size section of plant underneath the earth as well as above it. The mutant uses its limited intelligence to determine if nearing creatures are intelligent or unintelligent. All intelligent creatures are attacked with spore clouds that do 4d8 of acid-like damage up to a range of 30 meters. If the life continues to approach, the mutations with create jets of gas (intensity 14 poison) that will continue from the fungus until the being is dead or the fungus has been destroyed. Because of its tendency to ignore unintelligent life, it draws these types near it and they make homes on and around the fungus. The flesh of this fungus is said to have great curative properties and be able to bring back a youthful appearance and zest for life.

FLUTER "Mutated Sun Fish"

APPEARING: 1-6
ARMOR CLASS: 8
MOVEMENT: (16)
HIT DICE: 12
(Specie Average Hit Points: 24)
AVERAGE HEIGHT: 1 meter
MENTAL STRENGTH
(Specie Average): 18
INTELLIGENCE
(Specie Average): 3
DEXTERITY
(Specie Average): 18
CHARISMA
(Specie Average): 3
CONSTITUTION
(Specie Average): 18
PHYSICAL STRENGTH
(Specie Average): 4

MENTAL MUTATIONS PER SPECIE:

Repulsion Field
Anti Life Leech
Total Healing

PHYSICAL MUTATIONS PER SPECIE:

Increased Speed
Spines
Poison Skin (intensity 18)
Fangs

This mutation is feared in all the waters where it swims. The creature attacks other aquatic life by creating a bubble of air around its prey and drowning them in air! It is commonly found in deep pools near large collections of ANCIENT artifacts. It is aware of the nature of its skin and when natives try to capture it (for its poison flesh) it will try to use its spines to poison its enemies. The young of this specie will attack the fish in the area that may have a chance of threatening the older members of the school. The fish is also able to encourage the growth of its prey by killing off other fish that are able to eat what it considers its own. During the mating season (coldest time of the year) the creature will break through the ice on the the surface and make a fluting noise to attract other members of its species to its side. When all the members of that area are together, the mating process begins and the male is always killed in the process.

SORBEL "Mutated Humanoid Manfish"

APPEARING: 1-1,000
ARMOR CLASS: 2
MOVEMENT: (14)
HIT DICE: 18
(Specie Average Hit Points: 60)
AVERAGE HEIGHT: 2.5 meters
MENTAL STRENGTH
(Specie Average): 17
INTELLIGENCE
(Specie Average): 17
DEXTERITY
(Specie Average): 17
CHARISMA
(Specie Average): 17
CONSTITUTION
(Specie Average): 18
PHYSICAL STRENGTH
(Specie Average): 18

MENTAL MUTATIONS PER SPECIE:

Force Field Generation
Life Leech (triple strength)
Anti Life Leech
Mental Blast (double strength)

PHYSICAL MUTATIONS PER SPECIE:

Heightened Vision
Heightened Precision

These creatures appear to be perfectly human except for their webbed fingers and feet. They are able to live in the oceans or fresh water. While they appear human, they are totally animalistic in their attitude towards other intelligent life. They refuse to use any items of technology, preferring to use their mental and physical abilities to accomplish their ends. They ruthlessly try to exterminate all intelligent life they discover in their areas and go to great lengths to lure surface life from the shores of their homes into the water where they can kill them. They have adopted a program of breeding to stimulate the mental and physical growth of their race and those beings within the specie that have more than the usual abilities are highly favored and made leaders by the race. There is a common saying of the races that live near the water areas of the Sorbel and it goes "Never look a gift of the Sorbel in the mouth".

We hope to get Mr. Ward to create more critters for our entertainment pleasure. But you've got to let him know you want them! You can write him at our address.

Now, don't go away — and stop looking at those wonderful pictures by Erol Otus on this page. You can draw, too, can't you? Well look at the next column....

GAMMA WORLD ART CONTEST

If you've read Jim Ward's articles with all those new GW monsters, you've probably imagined what some of them look like. Gruesome ....

Well, show us. Send pencil, ink, or painted illustrations of any monster listed to "GW Art," care of this newsletter. The best illustration of EACH creature will be published in a future newsletter, and the best winner overall will receive a free copy of the new revision of the METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA TO OMEGA™ supplement, once published by TSR Hobbies as "Metamorphosis Alpha" and soon to be re-released as part of the GAMMA WORLD™ game system. The winner's copy will be very special — autographed by co-authors Gary Jaquet and Jim Ward!

Entries will be judged on accuracy (with respect to the published description) and quality. Full-color junk won't win over a high-quality pencil work.

Be sure to label the illustration with the name of the creature — sometimes it's hard to tell which is which. And PLEASE be sure to put your name, address, and membership number on the back so we can tell who's whose.

Your art might even be selected to be included in the newest version of the game itself!

The monsters you may illustrate in this contest are:

Airshoon	mutated humanoid
The Trek Droid	Android Unit
Bream	nonorganic intelligence
Cradengeen	mutated humanoid
Cratical	mutated lizard
Fluter	muated sunfish
Gurosh	mutated feline
The Companion	Robotic Unit
Sorbel	mutated humanoid manfish
Torel Plant	mutated fungus
Wess Wreel	mutated grapevine

No entries will be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope, and all entries become the property of RPGA HQ.

Notes For the Dungeon Master

This time we've got a few ideas from various members. Have fun, but remember what I said before with regards to odd items: if you don't want the players to get them, DON'T PUT THEM IN!

Next issue we're going to change the format; we're running out of gimmicks. We'll have one or two tricks and traps, but most of this column will give tips and techniques for being a better dungeon master.

— F

1. CHAMBER OF CHAOS: A main 80' square chamber is divided into 64 rooms, each 10' square, each with a door in each wall. When the party enters one, their door of entry slams shut and cannot be opened. There is a 50% chance that no doors will open for an hour, regardless of attempts; if not, then one of the doors (roll randomly) can be opened, leading to another little room.

Weapons are almost useless in this small a space, and spell casting can be tough when everyone's bumping into each other. An *audible glamer* of other doors slamming, footsteps, etc. just adds to the fun, and a minor monster (with body weapons) can wreak havoc.

— AR, Los Angeles, CA

2. TIGHT SQUEEZE: The party enters an area by a small secret door. A strange blue light comes on once every turn; those who fail to save (vs. spells) are *polymorphed* into very fat orcs (or whatever is preferable) and unable to fit out the door. Fortunately, a *dispel magic* effect comes on once per day, removing the effect if the party hasn't done it already.

— LE, Madison, WI

3. THE LOCK: Our wandering heroes find a large and heavy chest in the room after a hard fight. Numerous attempts at picking the lock all fail, and the chest is too fine to ruin it by bashing it open. The "lock" is a fake (or a trap only); the real lock is on the back of the chest, disguised as part of the design, and could be found as if a secret door.

— AS, West Bend, WI

4. THE PIT: The party easily spots a pit ahead, on the left side of the corridor. Moving to the right, they trigger the REAL pit, carefully hidden on that side.

Variation: The floor of the corridor ahead is a 5' square checkerboard pattern — which are the pits, and which are the safe spots? — DS, Apple Valley, CA

5. BEHOLDER: Cautiously entering a deep dungeon area, the party sees a beholder that says "Leave *immediately* and you might live." They scoot, of course, chased away by a gaseous spore with a *magic mouth* upon it (heh, heh, heh).

— VB, APO San Francisco, CA

6. DEITY: The party meets a shining figure who changes shapes at will and glows like the sun, who claims to be a demigod. But he's just an NPC evil cleric who drank a *potion of polymorph self.*

— SG, Framingham, MA

7. PROBLEM PALADIN: If that goody two-shoes paladin keeps interfering and you want to send him away for a while, but neatly — have him summoned by a mage living on another plane. He'll be sucked through as if by *monster summoning*, and may not be back for weeks.

— SG (MA) & F

8. VAMPIRE: Finally the party bursts into the crypt, opens the coffin, and drives a stake through the vampire's heart — but he gets up anyway and starts his devastating routine of charming and draining. He keeps his heart in a jar under the coffin, of course, where it probably won't be found.

— MM, Delta, BC, Canada

Two lethal ones from me, gang, so watch it:

9. AMBUSH: Passing through a deserted section of caves, the party is suddenly fiercely attacked by hobgoblins — moving at blinding speed and with a really nasty armor class. The hobgoblin shaman had a scroll, captured earlier, with *haste* and *slow* both on it and didn't blow either one in the casting. The party was *slowed* without knowing it, and the *hasted* hobgoblins are attacking 4 times to the character's once.

Spells are nearly impossible to cast in this battle, because when the hobgobs see someone start, they can easily move in and interrupt them.

10. CHECKPOINT: The party encounters a bunch of well-entrenched defenders, but notices that they are low level (their *magic missile* only does 8 points, a fighter dies after taking 15, and so forth). But the defending mage has a temporary *ring of spell storing* (no *permanency* added) made by the master of the complex, containing a *delayed blast fireball* (for 18d6+18), a *teleport*, and others.

No chance of error for the wimp mage, as it's a ring, and he leaves just before the blast goes off. Even if he gets captured, the party only has the use of the ring's spells once...and without that *permanency*, it becomes non-magical when emptied, much to their dismay.

NOTES FROM OVERSEAS

Don Turnbull, Managing Director of TSR Hobbies UK, Ltd., dropped into our Lake Geneva offices in early December to clarify a few points.

First, the D&D Players Association is the UK affiliate of the RPGA network, and is an organization of its own, not a "branch" of ours. At last count, they have a total membership of about 1500.

Things are quite different over there; they give a free one-year membership to anyone who fills out the appropriate card in a new D&D BASIC Set. (This is only put in games sold over there, and applies to local residents, not Americans.) Members receive a button, membership card and their newsletter, and may purchase a pin with the PA symbol (an attractive dragon's head).

American PA members will receive all mail by "sea mail delivery," which takes up to two months. If you want it faster, it'll cost a lot more for air mail.

One facet of British D&D games which is not commonly known in the US is playing games by mail. If you'd like to know more about it, let us know; we can reprint a series from their newsletter which discusses the problem in detail.

Our *German* members seem to be active gamers, and they get lots of support from US military personnel stationed in that area. A quick reminder: if you're anywhere near Mannheim, West Germany, check out the upcoming Mannheimer-Con game convention at the Mannheim Middle School on February 12-15, 1982. For more information, write to:

Grenadier Strasse Kriegspiel Society
181st Trans Bn
APO NY 09166

SPELLING BEE

This issue we're going to examine Invisibility. It occurs as the 2nd level Magic-User and Illusionist spells Invisibility, and their 3rd level spells of Invisibility 10' radius; 4th level Illusionist spell Improved Invisibility; Potion of Invisibility; Ring of Invisibility; and Dust of Disappearance.

Invisibility is one of the most misunderstood and misused of all spells, and thus is the topic in this first column of its type. The descriptions are relatively accurate, but can be a bit hard to understand fully.

Allow me to introduce some characters of mine: Felonius is a human magic-user of moderate level and talents. He and his friend Athelstan, a Ranger Lord, will demonstrate various spells and spell effects throughout this series. *(Athelstan doesn't have anything to do in this month's column, but he's got a contract for every issue. Smile, Athelstan, and wave to the nice people. Now go away.)*

Let's assume that Felonius is casting invisibility on himself. He gets out his gum and eyelash and starts saying the magic words, moving his hands in the proper motions (components V,S,M), and 12 seconds later (2 segments), he disappears. Everything he was carrying at the finish — at the end of the 12th second —disappears with him. He can now cast defensive or miscellaneous spells, move, etc. without 'popping in.' He can pop in whenever he wants, though; no other spells are necessary to break the invisibility.

The same effect applies if Felonius casts it on his friend Athelstan, except that *either* of them can break it at any time.

If ANYTHING distracts Felonius while he's casting, the spell will not take effect in the first place. Distractions include ANY damage to him, failing to make his saving throw vs. any attack form (charm, push, etc.), and being roughly moved, even if no damage results. Thus, if a fellow party member bumps into him during the casting (retreating from or moving to engage an opponent, for example), well — so it goes.

So what happens to the items Felonius is carrying? The term given in the spell description is "gear," and the Area of Effect is "Creature touched." Therefore, if Felonius is carrying 800 pounds of treasure and can barely stand, it all disappears; but if he's got his familiar (a mere toad) on his shoulder, the toad will NOT disappear; it's a separate creature, and not "gear."

Now we get to the deductions. If an item made invisible as "gear" remains invisible when it's put down, there will be problems. Some Chaotic would, no doubt, run around making things like rocks and tables invisible, just to create more Chaos when others wander into them. Invisible poisoned spikes would litter dungeon floors, and death and Chaos would quickly ruin the world. Therefore, whenever any item leaves the invisible creature's possession, it 'pops in.' Since the invisibility effect is created at one precise moment — the end of the casting —there's no reason why an item picked up by the invisible Felonius would disappear; indeed, it will remain clearly visible to all, showing Felonius' approximate location. This applies whether the item he's picking up was part of his gear or not. Follow me?

Can Felonius hide a visible gem he's found by hiding it under his cloak? No; the cloak's invisible, too, and will not block the sight of the visible item.

Generally speaking, tricks and traps involving an invisible item should be very rare; the spell affects a CREATURE and gear, and the gear becomes visible when leaving the creature. However, I think a *Limited Wish* (or *Wish*, or comparable spells) would make an item invisible. How does it reappear? Only if it attacks (?) or is dispelled. So making items invisible by themselves is neither easy nor common. (*Hallucinatory terrain* works better for hiding items, and is dispelled by touch.)

If any further disagreements arise on the effects of invisibility, consider the intent. When the book says "gear," it means the normal things the character could carry. Considering my ruling, a player levitated a wagon (by spell), then flew up (spell again) and supported a little bit of the weight himself; he then cast the invisibility, and claimed that as he was supporting the mass (physically and magically), that it was "gear," and should go invisible too. Sorry, I replied; he's stretching things. Use common sense and "DM's discretion."

Invisibility 10' radius works similarly. At the finish of the spell (18 seconds after starting, this time), every creature within ten feet of the caster disappears, along with the gear carried by each of them. This does NOT set up a "power field" of invisibility (a common misinterpretation) that you disappear when entering and reappear when leaving. After the casting is finished, the effect is the same as if invisibility had been cast on each creature, individually. As the spell description says, "Those affected creatures which attack negate the invisibility only with respect to themselves, not others made invisible." But note that the caster can, at will (not using any more spells) break *everyone's* invisibility, all at once; the caster can cause one or more of the invisible creatures to "pop in" and let others remain invisible, if desired.

For example, if an oncoming giant entered the 10' radius just as the spell went off, and therefore became invisible along with the party, Felonius could 'pop it in' and leave everyone else invisible. And even if Felonius attacked that giant, negating his own invisibility, the rest of the group would stay invisible (subject to their own actions); the caster's attack only negates his own effect, not that of the whole group.

Felonius, out with friends on horseback and seeing enemies approaching, once gathered everyone around, cast this spell, and caused the whole party, including the horses and gear carried by them, to disappear. But a wagon being pulled by some of the horses did not disappear, as it was not being carried but just dragged along.

The illusionist's spell *Improved Invisibility* works the same way as *invisibility* while it lasts, except that the invisible creature can attack without 'popping in.' Note that you don't get something for nothing, though; this marvelous effect is balanced by the low duration of the spell, as opposed to nearly unlimited duration of normal invisibility.

Speaking of 'nearly unlimited' duration — if Felonius doesn't attack (etc.) after becoming invisible, how long will he remain so? Although the spell description mentions eating, it seems that food eaten will remain visible through the digestive process, ending up as tiny particles forming a human-shaped mist as the molecules are circulated throughout the body. A few meals will effectively negate the effects of the invisibility. Dust and grime picked up in the course of a day or two must be carefully washed off, lest they give the show away. Ever see the movie?

If you decide that items picked up by an invisible creature disappear, be prepared for the ramifications. A mage could become the perfect bank robber, if he could just get near the money. What happens if he picks up another creature? Your players are going to try everything; just be ready.

In my campaign, players quickly realized the vast added benefits that invisibility would give a magic-user's familiar. I therefore ruled that familiars don't like it, at first, although they'll put up with it for short periods. But it takes weeks of daily practice before a familiar will feel comfortable riding around invisible on its invisible master's shoulder. War horses should have problems in a similar manner, unless the effect is carefully explained to them (by way of a *speak with animals* spell, for instance). Normal horses won't like it at all. As a rough guideline, creatures above animal intelligence will cooperate with invisibility (and possibly make good use of it), and those of animal intelligence or less will not.

A *Potion of Invisibility* works in exactly the same way as the spell, except that it has specified durations, depending on whether you drink all of it or just a sip. It does *NOT* give the effect of *improved invisibility* at any time, regardless of how much is consumed, nor can it create *in-*

visibility 10' radius.

The *Ring of Invisibility* is quite special; the wearer can "become invisible at will, instantly" (DMG). Although it only functions once per round, it is the fastest known method of 'popping out' in the AD&D system. The invisibility itself is quite normal in effect.

Invisible creatures may be detected without magic. The Dungeon Masters Guide has a table which explains things; simply, any creature with 7 or more levels has a chance at "seeing" invisible. Note that "10 or more levels" is the phrase used in the Players Handbook; the DMG is more recent, and should be used instead. Dragons "see invisible" too, the range determined by their age. Characters without the experience can use other means, if they're clever enough, to counter invisibility in some situations. For example, an invisible monster in a small room could be dimly seen by breaking a bag of flour or soot inside; the DM should note the danger of explosion if fire is present (medieval flour mills often exploded accidentally).

In any of these cases, however, the invisible creature is NOT clearly seen; rather, a "shimmering or haze" (DMG) is detected. Attacks thereafter have a -4 penalty on "to hit" rolls, and the creature gets +4 on all saving throws while invisible to the attackers. Felonius' *detect invisibility* spell will, of course, reveal the invisible creature to him completely; but that effect applies only to him. Felonius may guide others *(like Athelstan; where'd he go? The woods? Oh, well...)*, pointing and talking about where the invisible opponent is; but even with such aid, the penalties and bonuses will still apply. Sadly, Felonius can't cast a *detect invisibility* on anyone else (a thief, for example); it sure would be nice for that thief to find all the traps the easy way, but it can't happen. The book says only the caster can use this one.

Dust of Disappearance bestows an invisibility which is not detectable in these ways; its only flaws are that *detect magic* will pick it up, and that dust can be rubbed off or countered in other ways.

If there is ever a conflict in the printed information (for example, Monster Manual page 55, Invisible Stalker: "invisibility causes opponents to subtract 2 from 'to hit' dice rolls" conflicts with the -4 mentioned in the Players Handbook), the more recent information should be used to correct the old. MM came first, then PH, then DMG, DDG, and FF. Check the edition and date of publication, too.

If you have anything to add about invisibility in your campaign — including disagreements with my deductions — please write to us. Important points contributed by readers will be printed in a future issue of this newsletter.

Next issue, I'll discuss the common Evocations: *Magic Missile*, *Fireball*, and *Lightning Bolt*.

SAGA OF MARNIE

by Marnie Bosch

(For the first RPGA AD&D tournament, held at the GEN CON® East game convention in July, 1981, we offered a special promotional prize to the winner; an all-expense paid trip to the GEN CON *convention itself. The winner turned out to be a lovely young lady from New England, an experienced player and DM by the name of Marnie Bosch. This was an unexpected bonus; in AD&D games, the guys outnumber the gals about 9 to 1 at last count. Apparently the ladies who DO play do it well; there were several in the final rounds.*

We asked Marnie to write us about her experiences; this is her reply.)

When Harry (Master of the Green Dragon) told me that Jeff (the emperor) needed my aid, I was ready and not just a little excited. There would be much to do, but the tasks could also be enjoyable and all the nobility of the realm would be there. Even the noted Sir Guy of Gax was scheduled to make an appearance.

Thus began the adventures of Marnie in Conventionland, a strange and ex-

hausting tale that started on July 23, 1981, in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. Although I had been to several local conventions due to my membership in the Connecticut Game Club ("Ya GOTTA go, Marn-o, we need TEN DMs!"), the GEN CON East game convention was the Big Time, both in size and people. ("There are TSR people here, guys!!?!") It was the Big Pond for CGC, and we were ready.... (How many events am I running today? Wait 'till the people from TSR see THIS dungeon. What do you MEAN I have to run an event Sunday at 9 AM? I'm playing in the RPGA semi-final at 8:30!)

In case you haven't noticed yet, the key to conventions is organizing your chaos; you can't eliminate it, but (with the help of enough coffee) you can make it work for you. The fact that everyone is there to have fun certainly aids the process. So here I was in Cherry Hill watching, running, and playing in what was (up to this point) the biggest convention I'd ever been to. How was it, you ask? Exciting, fascinating, exhausting, and tremendously fun. No matter where you went something was always happening, and every inch of space seemed to contain some sort of game. At this convention I decided to play one, rather than just running events and running around. (When you're the chief gofer you do a lot of running.)

Well, the RPGA AD&D tourney became my obvious choice. After all, I had just joined the Association; the opening round didn't conflict with any of the CGC events I was involved in; and it sounded like a great event — small groups, emphasis on role playing, fellow contestants who were also avid gamers — how could I go wrong? AHA, you say; this looks like a setup for a disaster story. Well friends, nothing could be further from the truth. It was every bit as good as it sounded — sitting around with a small group of knowledgable players; running in a well-designed dungeon; overseen by a good DM. It was an experience made sweeter only by the fact that I was going on to the semi-finals (at 8:30 Sunday morning; who said you were supposed to sleep at conventions, anyway?). And so it went....

8:30 semi-final, and the adrenalin takes over. I'm playing with some of the best; we're feeding off of each others' ideas and doing some terribly clever things, and basically just having a grand old time. It's the ideal game, where mistakes are minimal and all the players seem to be at their peak; could anything make this moment better? Well, yes; the announcement that I have made it into the FINALS!

Now my adrenalin is running at a fever pitch. I'm playing a thief type (my favorite), and the other five players seem to have character types they like, and we're briefly living in the best of all possible worlds. (Sorry, Voltaire.) Have you ever noticed how playing with good people improves your playing tremendously? I have hit my stride, as have most of my fellow players, and it takes us a while to come back when the DM announces that "time's up". Oh, yeah; this is a hotel in New Jersey....I am a bookstore manager on vacation, not a halfling thief facing a tenth level Guildmaster who wants my hide....

So, I pick up my dice and move off to the final CGC event I'm involved in: luckily a seminar, as I'm much too excited to DM anything. The seminar goes well, despite the fact that all the participants are exhausted and many await the final moment of truth, the Awards Ceremony. My energy is failing... and is suddenly boosted — I have been chosen as the top player, and am being sent to the GEN CON XIV GAME CONVENTION in Kenosha, Wisconsin!!!!

Don't let anyone tell you that winning isn't great; for the next week I had trouble getting through doors. I think it's because my feet were floating a foot off the floor, but my friends think it's because my head increased in size threefold. I leave you to draw your own conclusions.

Thus ends Part One of the Saga of Marnie. Part Two begins with a swift kick back to the real world, when bright and

(continued on next page)

early on Monday morning of The Week, the news is full of an airline controllers' strike. (How can they DO this to me? They must know that I want to fly to Wisconsin.) But never fear, dear readers; the planes fly anyway, and on August 12th I'm off to the King of Conventions: GC XIV. Not only do I get to play in several events (including the RPGA AD&D tourney), but for the first time in my short convention history I am not running a single event! The perspective changes incredibly. Also, I am in my own small way a celebrity; I mean, the Kid from Connecticut gets to hobnob with the Big Boys. I always said I wanted to be rich and famous when I grew up, or at least rich; but now I understand the appeal of fame. While what I have done may mean little to my boss or my friends outside of the gaming world, it is important to me and I'm having trouble walking through doors again.

Frank Mentzer (yes, The Frank Mentzer) meets me at the airport; I stay at the same hotel as the TSR staff; I spend a fair amount of time talking to various media people; and of course, I play games. Now don't let anyone tell you that the GEN CON game convention is just like any other con; it isn't. It has its own ambience and, although it too is organized chaos, there is a quality there, an atmosphere, that belong to the GEN CON event alone, that makes it truly The Big gaming convention of the year.

There are people here from everywhere: Connecticut to Colorado to Canada. The dealers' area is HUGE. TV cameras and tape recorders roam the halls and, of course, the games never stop; they just change form or players. It's a rarefied atmosphere for a gamer and it makes one a bit giddy. I'm still not sure exactly what I did for the four days I was there, but I do know I had a marvelous time doing it. And yes, the TSR people are real and nice. Gary Gygax is a very pleasant, interesting man, his wife Mary is a gem, and one young gamer earned my eternal gratitude by asking for my autograph at the RPGA meeting.

And so it goes, and will hopefully continue to go for some time to come. For those of you who have been to a GEN CON game convention, you know about this excitement; for those who haven't, I hope this little bit of craziness has made you curious enough to go see for yourself. See you at GC XIV!

INCOMPLETE CONVENTION SCHEDULE '82

Here are some of the game conventions to be held in 1982. For the uninitiated, "Prereg" is registration before the event, and you can often save money doing it — but you won't get your money back if you don't go. "SASE" is a self-addressed, stamped envelope that helps speed up the operation, and is highly recommended even if they don't ask for it.

Know of more cons? Tell us; we'll tell everybody else.

*** EASTERN USA ***

GEN CON SOUTH Game Convention (Feb. 5-7, Jacksonville Beach, FL): The sixth annual, this is getting bigger and better, adding a new pavilion to the old site.AD&D Open, RPGA AD&D Tournament, RPGA Meeting. Guests: Mike Carr, Skip Williams, Frank Mentzer. POB 16371, Jacksonville, FL 32216

MAINECON 82 (Feb. 12-14, Portland, ME): John Wheeler is the director of this one; write to him at 245 Water St., Bath, ME 04530

MUNCH CON II (Apr. 16-17, Huntington, WV): The Marshall U. SF Society hosts this FREE one at Corbly Hall University. But send a SASE to the Society at Memorial Student Center, Marshall U., Huntington, WV 25701

MARCON XVII (Apr.30-May 2, Columbus, OH): Some games, much SF at the University Hilton (3110 Olentangy River Rd.). Write POB 2583, Columbus, OH 43216

LEXICON I (May 1, Rochester, NY): At the Bishop Kearney High School. Write to M. Bovard, 24 Leonard Crescent, Penfield, NY 14526

MICHICON (June 11-13, Detroit, MI): Sponsored by the Metro Detroit Gamers. Write POB 787, Troy, MI 48099

GEN CON EAST Game Convention (June 24-27, Cherry Hill, NJ): Another big one co-sponsored by The Game Wizards, including the AD&D Open, RPGA AD&D tournament and RPGA Meeting, and more. Write POB 139, Middletown, NJ 07748

ORIGINS 82 (July 23-25, Baltimore, MD): A big one, but no official AD&D tournaments. Write POB 15405, Baltimore, MD 21220

*** CENTRAL USA ***

FANTASYLAIR (Mar. 13-14, Ponca City, OK): The Northern Oklahoma Dungeoneers host a weekend of gaming and a Saturday Night Ball. Prereg is $6 daily ($4 if you belong to N.O.D.), $10 daily after Feb. 1st. Write POB 241, Ponca City, OK 74602

MAVCON 82 (Apr. 2-4, Arlington, TX): A SF/Fantasy/Wargaming con at the U. of Texas. Write POB 19348-50, U. of Texas, Arlington Station, Arlington, TX 76019

SPRING REVEL (Apr. 3-4, Lake Geneva, WI): A friendly old-time convention flavor comes to the American Legion Hall (735 Henry St.) with all types of games. Guests: Gary Gygax and others. Write POB 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147

CONTRETE MPS (Apr. 23-25, Omaha, NE): Science Fiction con, from the "Ship to Shore" group. Write POB 12373, Omaha, NE 68112

CONQUEST III (May 28-30, Kansas City MO): To be at the Continental Hotel at 11th & Baltimore. Prereg $9, $12 in May. Write POB 32055, Kansas City, MO 64111

GEN CON XV Game Convention (Aug. 19-22, Parkside, WI): The best, with everything. Everybody travels to this one, so try to get rooms ahead of time! RPGA Meeting. Write to POB 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147

CHICON IV (Sept. 2-6, Chicago, IL): The 40th World Science Fiction Convention, this is a big one — they expect 7,500 attendees! Huckster room, special guests, the works; if you've never been to a SF con, this is the one to try. Write POB A3120, Chicago, IL 60690

*** WESTERN USA ***

VIKING CON III (Feb. 5-7, Billigham, WA): Some games, lots of SF, Fantasy, Comics, etc. at the Billingham Holiday Inn. Write Viking Union Building, W. Wash. U., Billingham, WA 98225

DUNDRACON VI (Feb. 13-15, San Mateo, CA): Role playing featured at the Dunfey Hotel. Write 386 Alcatraz Ave., Oakland, CA 94618

ORC CON 82 (Feb. 13-15, Anaheim, CA): Southern California's largest, at the Sheraton-Anaheim Hotel next to Disneyland. $11 prereg, $12 at the door; $8 one-day only. Write to POB 2577, Anaheim, CA 92804

SCIENCE FICTION WEEKEND (Apr. 8-11, Irvine, CA): Prereg fees run from $7.50 to $17.50, the earlier the cheaper. Write to the Registry Hotel, 18800 MacArthur Blvd., Irvine, CA 92715

GENGHIS CON IV (June 5-6, Denver, CO): The Auraria Student Center at Metro State College is the site for this one. Write to that name and address for more information.

*** CANADA & FOREIGN ***

MANNHEIMERCON (Feb. 19-22, Mannheim, W. Germany): The Grenadierstrasse Kriegspiel Society hosts their second annual event, with a good selection of all types of games. Contact RPGA member Ray Norton, 181st Trans. Bn. APO NY 09166 or Mannheim Civilian 731-575 or Mannheim Military 8281.

MIGS III (May 30, Kitchener, Ontario): The Military Interest and Games Society invites everyone up for a FREE day of games, seminars, etc. at the Kitchener-Waterloo Reg. Police Assoc. Recreation Center. Write Les Scanlon, 473 Upper Wentworth St., Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L9A 4T6